



City of Portland, Maine
Health & Human Services Department
City of Portland
Aaron Geyer
Director Social Services

March 24, 2021

Re: LD 475 Resolve, To Create the Frequent Users System Engagement Collaborative

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Aaron Geyer and I serve as the Social Services Director with the City of Portland, which is the operator of the two largest homeless shelters in the State of Maine. I testify today on behalf of the City of Portland in support of LD 475, An Act To Create the Frequent Users System Engagement Collaborative (FUSE).

LD 475 would create the Frequent Users System Engagement Collaborative, the Collaborative aims to develop a comprehensive plan to provide stable housing and services to 200 individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are the most frequent consumers of high-cost services. This bill has no fiscal note however will make a notably positive impact on the lives of those experiencing homelessness by building collaboration and providing services in a more cost effective and streamlined model. In identifying the 200 individuals who have the highest number of interactions with Emergency Shelters, Emergency Room visits, Police, EMS and other high cost services, this will prove to be a more cost effective delivery model that has a proven track record throughout the country. This Collaborative will bring a group of leaders together who represent those high cost service areas to break barriers and silos by increasing partnership and service delivery. The Collaborative will build upon smaller more regional based groups, like the Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee's (ESAC) Long Term Stayers Initiative in Portland. That initiative has a tremendous housing retention rate of 94% among those who meet the criteria of a Long Term Stayer.

Let's use our resources in a more efficient and effective way to maximize and leverage resources within the current system. The Collaborative will provide services in a more cost effective manor and build capacity in the system by providing housing and support services for those more frequent users.

Thank You for the opportunity to testify.