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Testimony of Rep. Jan Dodge presenting

LD 512, An Act To Provide Intensive Case Managers to Counties That Do Not Have County Jails or Regional Jails

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good morning, Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. I am Representative Jan Dodge from House District 97 which includes Belfast, Northport and Waldo. I am here to present **LD 512, An Act To Provide Intensive Case Managers to Counties That Do Not Have County Jails or Regional Jails**.

I am here today, as I was in the 129th Legislature, to advocate for people who suffer with mental illness or substance use disorder and who have had an interaction with law enforcement that resulted in incarceration. For these people, an Intensive Case Manager is the point person who aligns wrap around services to reduce the number of people with mental illness in our jails.

This bill is focused on equity. Several counties have been sharing a case manager for years, and some years, even when positions have been added, have not been assigned to the counties who share a case manager. This guided the drafting of this bill.

These efforts have been ongoing and bipartisan. In 2017, The Stepping Up Initiative offered support for initiatives of this nature to continue. In the 128th Legislature, former chairs of the Health and Human Service Committee, Rep. Hymanson and Sen. Brakey, sent a letter to then-acting DHHS Commissioner Ricker Hamilton recommending that LD 966, An Act to Create Mental Health Liaison Positions in Each County Jail, be carried over to allow two pilot projects to be undertaken in Androscoggin and Penobscot Counties. In the 129th, LD 1756 attempted to “Improve Public Safety Through Coordinated Reentry of Prisoners Into the Community.” A Forensic Case Manager program established the shared services between Waldo, Knox, Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties, which utilizes the Two Bridges facility and was the foundation for the current sharing of one Intensive Case Manager position. This is to only name a few.

A memorandum from the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services dated April 2019 states the program had 60 ICM’s and 4 Supervisors in 1990. In February 2020, Commissioner Lambrew testified before the Joint Standing Committees of Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services (page 14, Item 52-FA1908) and indicated there were 10 Intensive Case Managers statewide. Evidence points to many people in our jails who might not be there if mental health and community supports were provided in a consistent way.

Our Waldo County Reentry Center leadership recognized the value of ICM services and secured grants to supplement the current part time position. Over the years, as Intensive Case Manager positions have been added, they have not addressed the specific county need. Again, this bill is focused on equity. For Maine residents to benefit fairly from these invaluable services, it seems appropriate to establish a “standard of one” ICM per county.

Please pass LD 512 to provide an Intensive Case Manager for each county. I will try to answer your questions, but would ask that you direct your technical questions to those who have more expertise in this field than I. Thank you.