



Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine

The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers

Malory Otteson Shaughnessy, Executive Director

Testimony in support of LD 512

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

Sponsored by Representative Jan Dodge

March 25, 2021

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Good morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. I am Malory Shaughnessy, a resident of Westbrook, and the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. The Alliance is the state association for Maine's community based mental health and substance use treatment providers. The Alliance advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Alliance in support of LD 512.

The Alliance worked with Representative Dodge in the formulation of this legislation last session and is very supportive of both the need for more investment in intensive case managers in our criminal justice system, and an expansion of the definition of who they can serve, and when they can serve them.

We know that many people struggling with substance use disorder or mental health conditions that fall short of the classic few diagnoses considered "serious mental illnesses" need support in stabilizing symptoms and transitioning away from the high levels of incarcerations that individuals with these challenges face.

Although an individual with a severe and persistent mental illness is 11 times more likely to be the victim of a crime than to perpetrate one, once incarcerated they will serve three times longer periods of incarceration than someone who commits the same crime with no mental health challenge.

We need more and not less of these intensive case managers to help divert people away from the criminal justice system and into the community with the supports they need to live a productive life. This helps improve the health and safety of our families and communities.

The department does appear to be committed to increase the number of ICMs, but we agree that we should be working to go further and back to the place we were in a decade ago when we had more than 30 ICMs, and that they must be equitably distributed throughout the state. The Alliance urges this committee to support this legislation as well as other legislation that calls for increased investments in these critical positions.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 512.