



Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

April 2, 2021

Testimony Support of LD 432 “Resolve, To Improve Behavioral Health Care for Children”

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and the distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Nancy Cronin and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council)¹.

For years I have watched children with Developmental Disabilities receive services through multiple parallel systems. It is not unusual for a child with disabilities to receive special education services, perhaps with educational technician support, then after school receive either Section 65 or Section 28 Behavioral Health Professional (BHP) support. That same child may receive speech therapy at school through the educational model then speech therapy at home through the medical model. These are just two examples of parallel services between the educational and medical system.

LD 432 would allow collateral contact to be a billable service. Collateral contact would allow that educational technician to coordinate with the BHP so, for example, that the child who has been learning appropriate ways to get their needs met can receive the same message from all the professionals around them. The speech therapist at school could talk to the speech therapist outside school so that the same methods for therapy can be delivered maximizing the skills of the child. This really does just make sense.

¹ Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1970. Maine’s DD Council has been advocating for individuals with Developmental Disabilities (DD) for over 40 years. The DD Council is a federally-funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

As required in federal law¹, our purpose is to promote systems change to ensure that all individuals with developmental disabilities are able to live and fully participate in their communities of choice. Working in partnership with people with disabilities, parents, advocates, and policy makers, Maine’s DD Council works to promote the independence, integration, and inclusion of all people with disabilities through advocacy, capacity building, and systems change activities throughout the state of Maine and on the national level. The DD Council’s mission is **to create a Maine in which all people are valued and respected because we believe communities are stronger when everyone is included**. The Maine DD Council employs four full-time staff who are responsible for all of the internal projects, external grants, and business of the Council.

My only request is that this bill be amended to ensure professionals who work with children through Section 28 are also able to be reimbursed for collateral contact time. This issue is not just for children with behavioral health needs, but also children with developmental disabilities. It is extremely important that coordination of care is able to occur to maximize treatment.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today and would be happy to take any questions.