



## **TESTIMONY**

In Support of

### **LD 1197, Resolve, To Require Continued MaineCare Reimbursement to Nursing Facilities for Bed hold Days during Hospitalization and Therapeutic Leaves of Absence**

**Brenda Gallant**

**Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

April 5, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and committee members, my name is Brenda Gallant. I am the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. The Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a statewide non-profit organization that provides advocacy for older adults and adults with disabilities who receive long-term services and supports in all settings. We serve residents in nursing homes, assisted housing including residential care and assisted living facilities, adult day programs and recipients of home care services. Additionally, we serve patients in hospitals who experience barriers in accessing long-term services and supports.

We support this legislation that requires the Department of Health and Human Services to continue to provide reimbursement under the MaineCare program to nursing facilities for direct care costs during hospitalization and therapeutic leave.

With prior approval, MaineCare provides payment to hold the resident's bed up to seven day during a hospitalization. (MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, 67.05) For residents with COVID-19 who require hospitalization, the bed hold has been extended up to fourteen days. We greatly appreciate that the Department of Health and Human Services has implemented this measure because we know well the devastating impact of the pandemic on nursing home residents across the state. The bed hold provision is very important to residents because it provides protection for their placement at the nursing home. The goal of bed hold is to provide a continuous place of residence. When older and disabled residents must move into a nursing home, the nursing home becomes their home. We know from our experience with facility closures as well as other circumstances, that when residents must move from one nursing home to another it is particularly difficult for them.

Direct care reimbursement in nursing homes pays for the costs for staffing. It is unlikely that a nursing home would reduce their staff during the hospitalization of a resident. This is important to staff who need the security of consistent employment. It is also critical as our state faces such an urgent need for staffing in long-term care.

Thank you for your consideration.