

Bill Flagg  
Caribou

Testimony in Favor of LD 964:

An Act to Expand Access to Certified Substance Use Disorder  
Recovery Residence Services

April 6, 2021

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer & Members of the Health & Human Services  
Committee:

My name is Bill Flagg and I reside in Stockholm, Maine. I have spent 41 years as Director of Community Relations and Development at Cary Medical Center in Caribou. I am a volunteer and Treasurer of the Board of Directors for the Center for the Advancement of Rural Living (AKA CARL) a nonprofit 501C-3 organization based in Caribou, Maine. CARL is the owner of Caribou Recovery House, a MARR Certified Alcohol and Drug Free living environment for men in recovery. Our house has been opened since August of 2020. Many volunteers, including students from the Loring Job Corps Center and members of our board worked many hours during the summer and fall of 2020 to complete much needed interior renovations of the property.

Our house supports five men in recovery and has a house manager. The house has received tremendous community support. The house residents have done a lot of volunteer work in the community and the men live with the rules and regulations as established by the MARR Guidelines that Dr. Springle discussed earlier.

A number of our residents have been referred to us through the criminal justice system. Recovery Housing is a critical player in helping recently incarcerated men find a place of support and comradery. Without such resource these men often end up right back to the same environments that lead them to incarceration. To date, not one of our residents have returned to jail since living at the house. It is our hope to open a MARR Certified Women's Recovery House in Caribou in the near future.

The serious issue of Opiate Addiction and overdose deaths is what led our organization to establish the Caribou Recovery House. Even with this new resource we are still losing young men and women in Aroostook County. More such facilities are badly needed. We have had a waiting list and it is so frustrating to tell men looking for this option that there is no room at the inn. What is important is that we not only have additional such housing options but that they are operated under strict guidelines as designed by the Maine Association of Recovery Residences or MARR. These guidelines help to provide infrastructure and grounding to men who live in the house and establish a strong foundation for new house managers and owners. MARR certification helps to insure that the houses maintain a safe, secure environment and that they are worthy of ongoing support. I urge this committee to support LD964 with an 'ought to pass' committee recommendation. Thank you for consideration and for providing me the opportunity to deliver these remarks.

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