



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

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April 7, 2021

Good Afternoon,
Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the
Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Simonne Maline, I am the Executive Director of the
Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am here today on behalf
of the CCSM to testify in support of **LD 1009: Resolve, Resolve, To
Create a Health Care Ombudsman Position To Serve in
Maine's County Jails.**

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written
into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory
capacity and to provide legislators with guidance and advice regarding the
delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from
those served by them.

The CCSM has worked with Representative Madigan to bring forward
this issue. Time and time again when we hold community forums across
the state for our fellow mental health peers, we hear a variety of
concerns regarding county jails. Some of those concerns are, lack of
access to medications, mental health services, family law assistance,
interpreters, etc.

In an effort to address these concerns we spoke with many different
stakeholders who have recommended changes to the original bill. To
correct what we didn't know at the time, we now have an amendment for
the committee presented by Rep. Madigan.

We are excited to hear that OBH is proposing to add additional ICM
positions in the jails. When talking to them about their roles we see them
filling the important front-end work of diversion and then helping people
as they transition back into the community. Where the gap lies is when
people who are in jail are unable to access healthcare or other essential
supports because there is no organized entity to ask for help.
We know that if there are identified organizations/staff that can be



contacted and are willing to help problem solve in the moment with the individual, most issues can be taken care of.

The vision in moving to a workgroup is because we want to really get this right! The more we learn, we realize that there is more research/work that needs to be done. We hope through the collective efforts and expertise of the workgroup we can develop a solid set of recommendations and potential bill(s) that may be needed to get this initiative off the ground!

We dream of a day when county sheriffs in Maine can no longer say that they run the largest mental health facilities in the state. Our fellow Mainers/peers deserve to not have to languish in jails. If they in fact cannot be diverted from a jail stay, let us make sure they have the supports needed while incarcerated.

We urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 1009 as amended.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Simonne Maline,
Executive Director
