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Testimony of Rep. Colleen Madigan Introducing LD 1147, "Resolve, To Enhance Access to Medication Management for Individuals with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness"  
April 12, 2021

We keep hearing about the crisis in behavioral health services. We keep hearing rate bills. That is our job here on this committee.

This bill is one of those.

Medication management services are a vital part of our behavioral health care system. Psychiatric care from providers who specialize in this kind of care are necessary. You wouldn't get surgery from your primary care physician and if you have a serious mental health diagnosis, you should see an appropriate specialist.

For Maine residents, particularly those in rural areas, access to these services is limited, and it is expensive to offer these services. This bill aims to raise the rate for psychiatric medication management services so that providers do not continue to lose money. But at its heart, this bill is about access to these services. When rates do not cover the cost of providing services, agencies reduce the area covered, providers leave and programs close. I am aware that the Department is working on a rate study, but I don't think we can wait. Prior to the pandemic, our mental health system was frayed. This has only worsened. I believe it is our responsibility to act now to protect the availability of these services for some of Maine's most vulnerable citizens.

People will be coming after me to describe the need for this in greater detail, but I will be happy to answer any questions you may have now.

I look forward to working with you on this bill.