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Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine *The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers*

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Testimony in Support of LD 415 Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services To Increase MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Targeted Case Management Services To Reflect Inflation

Sponsored by Representative Paul Stearns

April 15, 2021

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

I am Jennifer Christian, of Dresden, Maine, and the Project Manager at the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Alliance in Support of **LD415, Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services To Increase MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Targeted Case Management Services To Reflect Inflation**

The Alliance represents Maine's safety net community-based mental health and substance use treatment agencies. We advocate for sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral healthcare system.

LD415 would require the Department of Health and Human Services to increase the reimbursement rate for Section 13 Targeted Case Management (TCM) services to reflect inflation over the past 12 years since the current rate was established in 2009.

Section 13 case management serves the needs of many diverse communities of people across Maine. Case Management Services provide critical social services delivered by a trained health professional to identify the medical, social, educational and other needs (including housing and transportation) of the eligible member, identify the services necessary to meet those needs, and facilitate access to those services. Case management consists of intake/assessment, plan of care development, coordination/advocacy, monitoring, and evaluation. That is a lot of work and it takes a complex set of skills to do well.

Unfortunately, the reimbursement rate for this essential service (like many behavioral health services) has not had an increase since 2009. The capacity for providing this service has therefore diminished over time as wage increases and employee health insurance, as well as a myriad of other costs, have increased for the providers of these services. The Covid-19 crisis has further increased provider costs, and decreased qualified workforce availability. Not to mention, there is no reimbursement for travel time, recent increases in paperwork, or other workload items not deemed as "direct service."

As the bill references, it provides case management services for some youth and adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities, but it also provides these essential services for many others.

- Youth with chronic medical and behavioral health disorders, and their families, benefit greatly from these services to support them and help keep them connected to the myriad of services they may need over time.
- Adults struggling with substance use disorder, who are pregnant, are eligible and this can fulfill a critical need to assure that the child born is healthy. According to the 2019 Maine KIDS COUNT Data Book, one in 12 babies born in Maine is born dependent on drugs.
- Adults with HIV also can benefit from this assistance in assuring they are getting all of their complex health care needs met.
- A final group who can benefit from this service are those experiencing homelessness, who require treatment services from a variety of agencies for medical or other social determinants of health, and are unable to manage them on their own.

With the growing waiting lists for all these groups seeking targeted case management services, it is critical that we grow the workforce able to deliver these services. The thread that runs through all of these eligibilities for youth and adults is a need for assistance in coordinating and connecting to a variety of much needed services, and the potential that without this essential service, access to all of the other services might fall apart.

We urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD415