



**Community Health and Counseling Services**  
*Home Health, Hospice and Mental Health Services*

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April 15, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Dale Hamilton and serve as the executive director of Community Health and Counseling Services (CHCS). I am writing in support of LD 582, Resolve to Support the Fidelity and Sustainability of Assertive Community Treatment.

Assertive Community Treatment is an evidenced-based practice that is an important part of the continuum of community-based services. It improves outcomes for people with severe mental illness who are most at risk of psychiatric crisis, hospitalization, homelessness, and involvement in the criminal justice system.

This bill is yet another attempt to address the underfunding of community-based mental health services. This legislature and past legislature's have been asked to digest the complexities of various services and determine if the funding methodology is sufficient to support that service. I appreciate the difficulty that this type of request places on you as a legislator. I am going to ask you to consider the merits of this bill from a slightly different perspective.

Reimbursement for this service has not changed in over 15 years. We do not need a formal examination of our rate structure to know that flat funding over a 15-year period amounts to a **rate cut** year over year. These rate cuts have reduced access and continue to jeopardize existing services. My request is that you consider this request on the basis of the question: Is it reasonable to assume that ongoing rate cuts adequately support our community-based mental health system while we wait for the promise of resolution via another rate study process?

I appreciate the difficult work that you perform on behalf of the citizens of Maine. If I can be of any assistance throughout this process please feel free to connect with me at [dhamilton@chcs-me.org](mailto:dhamilton@chcs-me.org).