



April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Written Testimony in Support of LD 415

Good Afternoon, Senator Claxton and Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Meredith Inosencio, Case Management Director at the Morrison Center. I have 22 years' experience working with adult and children with Intellectual and Development Disabilities and Autism. With the last 13 years in Case Management. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in support for LD-415

The Morrison Center is a non-profit organization that started in the 1950's Our mission is to build bright futures for children and adults with disabilities by empowering them to achieve maximum growth and independence. Our agency has several specialized purpose schools, OT, PT, Speech, adult and children's residential programs, adult day programing, case management, and care coordination. We serve about 800 individuals, throughout Southern and Central Maine.

Our Case Managers provide comprehensive and exceptional services to children and adults with intellectual disabilities and autism, by advocating, coordinating, and planning services around their person-centered needs. These services are not limited to, housing, transportation, medical referrals, grants, adaptive equipment, employment coordination, or daily counseling support and advocacy. One inspiring Case Management story is of a young lady we have supported for 8 years. 8 years ago, she lived in a group home and attended a day program. Over the last few years our case management department supported her with getting a job, getting her driver's license, buying a car, and attending a homeowners class where she than obtained a low interest mortgage which we than supported her with buying her own home 3 years ago. Currently her only service is case management and 5 hours a week of home supports. This lady continues to rely on our Case Management support with bi-monthly visits, rep-payee services, and phone calls as needed.

As you are aware the Case Management rates have not increased since 2009, but the requirements have doubled. For example, prior to 2010 Case Managers were required to write 1 (non-billable) note in the EIS database system for the entire month describing all the Case

Managers activities. Now Case Managers are required to write a non-billable note for each contact made, this can includes (all phone calls, home visits, funding requests, plan writing, team meetings, etc) This expectation that started around 2010 went from roughly 5 hours of non-billable work a month to over 5 hours each week. A few of the additional requirements put in place by the department since 2009 have included; training requirements for the SIS, Rep-payee, new PCP requirements, behavioral regulations training, 90 day reportable event follow ups, supported decision making, and now HCBS training requirements, and a new Evergreen database system. Each of these new department requirements require non-billable in person trainings and/or multiple webinars to become proficient in the department requirements. These increased expectations have affected case managers longevity in this career, as well as make it impossible to hire skilled, dedicated, and passionate case managers. In my 13 years of case management experience, I have never seen such a shortage of case managers, either not applying, and/or not taking the job due to inadequate pay. Individuals and families are getting frustrated at the turnover, and high caseloads due to agencies being unable to hire after someone leaves. This has a direct impact on the individuals services, person-centered progress, and IEP goals.

Without an increase to offset a decade of inflation our agency is unable to hire skilled, dedicated, and passionate case managers to provide advocacy to one of our most vulnerable populations.

I urge your support of LD 415,

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

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