



4/15/2021

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

Good afternoon, Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Rebecca Patkus and I am a Regional Director with Outpatient and Community Services at Spurwink. Spurwink provides behavioral health and education services for children, adults and families. Spurwink has been in operation for 60 years and has various locations statewide. Spurwink has provided Adult Community Case Management since 2015, and we employ six Adult Community Case Managers, serving 140 clients across 11 counties. I appreciate the opportunity to offer this written testimony to the committee in support of LD 415.

Spurwink's Adult Community Case Management program partners with consumers and their guardians to provide support, advocacy and assistance in achieving their goals. Our case managers play a critical role in our consumers' lives, connecting them to essential services and supports to ensure their health and safety, which has been especially important during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This proposed rate increase for Section 13 Targeted Case Management is desperately needed. The current level of reimbursement, which has not been adjusted since 2009, does not support agencies to hire, train, and retain the high-quality staff who are needed for this demanding and complex job. We continue to experience a high rate of staff turnover in this program. Despite our attempts to make the workload manageable, we have routinely experienced case managers resigning, reporting they will be going elsewhere to do less demanding work for better compensation, either within our same field or elsewhere. This turnover only worsens the problem of current staff feeling overworked by increasing caseloads while we try to recruit staff in this challenging hiring environment and then train new staff in an incredibly complex service delivery model. Consumer and guardian satisfaction surveys also reflect that frequent staff turnover is challenging for our consumers, despite our best efforts to mitigate any negative impact.

The challenges that our consumers are facing due to the lack of high-quality services and resources in their communities are making the jobs of our Adult Community Case Managers even more demanding. We frequently receive referrals for consumers who have Adult Protective services in large part due to the inadequate supports, both natural and

paid, available to them. These consumers are especially vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation, and many of these individuals require daily support that is simply not available. Many of these consumers rely on crisis services and emergency departments, and some have been incarcerated. Even though many of these individuals are eligible for home support services and have received funding, these services are often not available due to significant shortages of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). In these situations, case managers are being contacted and often times being called upon for assistance when there are unmet health and safety needs that require immediate attention, and they are tasked with coordinating alternative plans and resources. Particularly for our case managers who serve more rural communities, these gaps and shortages in our system are incredibly problematic. All of these challenges have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

To be in alignment with our mission and values, we continue to provide high-quality services to our clients and high-quality supervision to our staff despite the inadequate reimbursement rate. Our Adult Community Case Management program continues to have an annual loss which is not sustainable. Without an increase to offset a decade of inflation, providers are unable to maintain the capacity needed to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to the care and support they need to live and thrive in the community.

I urge your support of LD 415. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony. Please contact me with any questions you may have.