



Committee on Health and Human Services  
Tuesday, April 20, 2021

*Testimony in Support of LD 1157 An Act To Ensure MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Home and Community-based Services for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism Are Adjusted in Accordance with Increases in State and Municipal Minimum Wage*

Good morning, Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Laura Cordes, executive director of the Maine Association for Community Service Providers. MACSP is the statewide association of more than 70 organizations providing services and support to thousands of children, adolescents, and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) so that they may live and thrive throughout Maine communities. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to provide testimony in support of LD 1157 *An Act To Ensure MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Home and Community-based Services for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism Are Adjusted in Accordance with Increases in State and Municipal Minimum Wage*

The overwhelming majority of providers of MaineCare and Medicaid medically necessary services to Mainers with IDD rely on non-negotiable MaineCare rates to operate their programs. This bill would require these rates to be adjusted on an annual basis as the minimum wage is increased, either by state statute or through municipal ordinances. It would also require adjustment for other wage requirements such as the hazard pay currently required under the recently adopted City of Portland ordinance.

The 2020 Portland minimum wage and hazard pay ordinance has left providers who are either based in Portland or providing in-home and community support in Portland, struggling to spread a fixed wage rate component – some that are currently under minimum wage - to \$18 an hour. In order to meet the hazard pay requirement, providers over the last several months have cut staff and service hours, impacting the quality of care. The majority of our dozen providers supporting Mainers with IDD in Portland are now either ending services or relocating them to a different town altogether, simply because the state system which they rely on is not designed to be adjusted for minimum wage and emergency hazard pay increases. Without a rate adjustment, it will become increasingly difficult for the State to ensure that the hundreds of MainCare members in Portland are able to maintain or secure access to the support they need and deserve in the city they have chosen to call home.

We share the Department's goal for MaineCare members to have access to high-value and quality services. MaineCare rates therefore must be financially viable to sustain a network of providers to ensure this access.

As the Department continues to undertake the work of creating a comprehensive, streamlined, coherent and transparent rate-setting system, we encourage the committee to support the inclusion of this provision for all MaineCare fee for service rates.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Cordes, Executive Director

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