



Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

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23 April 2021

Testimony in support of LD 1543 An Act To Improve and Modernize Home-based Care

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Rachel Dyer, and I am the associate director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council. Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1970. Maine's DD Council has been advocating for individuals with developmental disabilities for nearly 50 years. The DD Council is a federally funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities. As required in federal law, we are involved in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities, with the goal that individuals with developmental and other disabilities of all ages are fully included, integrated and involved in their communities and the decisions impacting their lives.

Maine was a leader in adopting telehealth in Medicaid, Nevertheless, even as Covid has shone a light on both the utility of technology it has revealed gaps in its effective use. We submit comments on two areas identified in the bill:

MDDC supports increasing access to telehealth and telemonitoring services for those who specifically want and would benefit from this type of support. People who choose to utilize these services through the waivers report being generally satisfied. Throughout the pandemic, MDDC heard from individuals and caregivers who had had previously not used technology who found it useful and convenient (and who, in some cases, surprised others by their competence).

Appropriate use of medication, especially psychoactive medication, is a concern identified by individuals living with developmental disabilities and their families. MDDC supports increasing access to medication reviews in any format that is useful to the individual, which should include virtual.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.