



Cumberland County District Attorney's Office

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May 20, 2021

The Honorable Cathy Breen, Senate Chair
The Honorable Teresa Price, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
State House, Room 228
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: L.D. 1470, *Regarding Reimbursement for Providing Inpatient Care to Individuals with Acute Mental Health Care Needs*

Senator Breen, Representative Price and members of the committee,

I am writing in support of LD 1470, *Regarding Reimbursement for Providing Inpatient Care to Individuals with Acute Mental Health Care Needs*.

As I am sure you are aware, the Cumberland County District Attorney's Office is tasked with enforcing the law, protecting public safety, speaking for victims, creating solutions that reduce recidivism, and acting in the interests of justice. When people ask what is needed to reduce recidivism and address the root cause of issues that bring people into the criminal justice system, addressing mental health issues appropriately is key. Resources throughout the state for addressing mental health issues, including in Cumberland County, are very limited and we need more. Law enforcement needs these resources to properly divert people from the criminal justice system and the safety of individuals, including the person with the mental health issues. This is why I support LD 1470.

The new psychiatric beds in York County have been helpful in addressing some of the issues in Cumberland County. From the information I have received, 20% of the admissions for those beds in York County are from Cumberland County. That said, we need to make sure that these are functioning in their full capacity. Although health care costs and reimbursement is not my area of expertise, I understand and respect the need for these beds to function and to help those in need. It is important for these beds are funded in a manner that will make it feasible for health care providers to make these necessary beds possible available.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Sahrbeck
Cumberland County District Attorney