



**LD 1624: To Create a Stakeholder Group
to Identify the Needs of Long-term Care
Family Caregivers**

May 3, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Laurie Belden and I'm a resident of Durham. I serve as the executive director of the Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine -- a membership organization representing home care, home health care and hospice providers across the State. I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1624 presented today by Representative Craven.

Home care, home health care and hospice providers work closely with family members (and community supports) to ensure appropriate and consistent care is delivered to the aging adult and those with disabilities requesting care in the home. The demand for in-home care continues to increase due to Maine's aging population which continues to strain on our workforce. Family members are often called upon to play a more active role in caring for their loved one in the home. It's more important than ever to work together in supporting the worker, the patient and the family.

Quality care in the home is contingent on the patient receiving the right services that address their specific needs and preference. Efficient, thorough and timely assessments are critical in establishing a proper plan of care that will nurture their overall health, safety and wellbeing.

Creating a mechanism for prompt assessment of the competences of family members will permit the patient and their family to make an informed choice regarding their care. The referral system is another critical component to delivering quality care. Evaluating the system routinely is good practice to substantiate that the patient is receiving appropriate services and support to allow them to maintain their independence and continue to live in their home, if that is their preference.

We respect the integrity of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program and staff and support the initiative of convening stakeholders to consider methodology to assess family needs when contemplating long-term care services, as well as to evaluate the referral system to ensure timely and appropriate care coordination. I respectfully ask that the Alliance and a provider of in-home care be included under Sec. 2: Stakeholder group membership.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of LD 1624.

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