

Bethany DeLorenzo
Group Main Stream

Good morning, Senator Claxton, Representative Myer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1573 An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues.

My name is Bethany DeLorenzo and I am a Residential Manager for Group Main Stream

- o Our agency is running with 1200 open hours. Due to the lack of employee composition we are currently losing staff due to the low rate of pay and are not having possible employee hires due to the lack of pay for the jobs they will be performing.

- o The staff employed within are agency are tired. Most of our employees are working multiple jobs with competing agencies and are working 80+ hours a week. Which intern is hard on both the employees and the members we support. Being a Residential Manager I am left at times to cover shifts and call outs and filling in gaps where there is no staff to work. This takes time away from my family and at times has left me working 70-80 hours a week. This has consistently been the case since the pandemic. When working long hours over an extended period with no end in sight has been extremely difficult to maintain a steady home life. Not knowing when I will be home to see my family or leaves me scrambling to find alternative childcare at any moment in time. This adds an extra layer of stress on me, my family, my staff and my agency as a whole.

- o Our staff and agency are exhausted. They work hard, are pulling long hours and covering as best as they can since they care about the work they are doing and the members they supports safety. But as this continues for as long as it has staff have been chosen to leave the field taking jobs for higher pay and less responsibilities.

- o Member care is always my priority. When staff are tired, working multiple jobs and long hours I am always fearful of what impact this is having on our clients. Are the staff doing everything they are supposed to? Are the members being taken care of? Are they getting out enough? These worries never stop.

- o The agency has seen an increase in staff turn over since the pandemic. Why should they put their health at risk? With the increased turn over there has also been a significant lack of new applicants. We lose staff faster than we can hire new staff. At times we go weeks with no one applying to our agency.

- o Do I feel that the DSP position is valued in Maine? The answer is no. If DSP's were valued then I would not be participating in this forum. We are forced to under pay the work the staff are doing because we are bound by the amount of reimbursement, we receive from Mainecare.

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