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STATE OF MAINE  
ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

March 26, 2020

Paul Saucier, Director of the Office of Aging and Disability Services  
Department of Health and Human Services  
11 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0011


Dear Mr. Saucier,


The Health and Human Services Committee held several work sessions in February and March to discuss the recommendations of the Commission to Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues. We are grateful for your attendance and assistance at the work session held on March 12, 2020.

The Commission's report includes recommendations relating to grant opportunities. The purpose of this letter is to request that the Office of Aging and Disability Services applies for a grant under the Lifespan Respite Care program offered by the Administration for Community Living within the federal Department of Health and Human Services. The May deadline for this grant application is approaching. Maine has not received a grant under this program and attaining such a grant would be hugely beneficial to our respite system. We understand that this is a particularly difficult time to pull together administrative resources and collective efforts. However, our understanding is that the Long Term Care Ombudsman, and other stakeholders, are willing and able to assist your Office with the application process. We do not want to see this opportunity missed.

As you know, Maine relies upon family members and other unpaid caregivers as a critical piece of the long-term services and supports safety net. Relieving pressure on family caregivers prevents or delays the need for higher levels of care and is tremendously important for the mental and physical health of caregivers. The Lifespan Respite Care program grant assists states with establishing and expanding coordinated respite systems to serve family caregivers by developing emergency respite services, training and recruiting respite workers and volunteers, and increasing access. We respectfully request that your office applies for this important grant. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Sen. Geoffrey M. Gratwick  
Senate Chair

  
Rep. Patricia Hymanson  
House Chair

cc: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Commissioner Jeanne M. Lambrew, Department of Health and Human Services  
Molly Bogart, Government Relations Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
Brenda Gallant, Long Term Care Ombudsman