

Janet T. Mills
Governor



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
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Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner

May 10, 2021

Senator, Claxton Co-Chair
Representative Meyer, Co-Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1649 – An Act to Make the Shared Living Program Accessible for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Department opposes LD 1649, *An Act to Make the Shared Living Program Accessible for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism* because this bill is out of alignment with the current structure of the shared living program. Additionally, the changes proposed are unnecessary, given that reimbursement methods are already in place for home accessibility adaptations.

The shared living program for individuals with intellectual disability or autism is funded by MaineCare through the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) programs (Sections 21 and 29). The Department establishes a daily rate which is paid to an enrolled MaineCare provider who recruits and oversees the shared living provider as an independent contractor. Under this arrangement, the MaineCare provider is known as the oversight agency. The Department has no provider agreement or direct reimbursement with the independently contracted shared living providers. Therefore, the suggested definition of “shared living residence” within this bill, under Section 1, is not accurate, and this change would fundamentally alter the current structure of the program.

All funds are provided to the oversight agency and it is the responsibility of the oversight agency to ensure the shared living provider is delivering quality care. It also is the responsibility of the oversight agency to ensure the shared living setting is accessible prior to seeking authorization from the Department to provide shared living services. Funding for modifications could be covered in the administrative costs that the oversight agencies receive for an individual. The current average daily shared living rate for one person is one hundred and fifty-six dollars (\$156.00), with one hundred dollars (\$100.00) on average going to the shared living home provider. This means an oversight agency retains fifty-six dollars (\$56.00) on average to cover home coordination, training, administration, quality oversight and program costs.

If requested, we would be happy to provide additional information for this topic during the work session for this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Saucier".

Paul Saucier, Director
Office of Aging and Disability Services