



TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Neither For Nor Against

[LD 693](#) – *An Act To Make the Pilot Program Providing Mental Health Case Management Services to Veterans a Permanent Program*

March 22, 2021

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, my name is Jeffrey Austin and I am with the Maine Hospital Association. I am offering this testimony neither for nor against LD 693.

The Maine Hospital Association (MHA) represents all 36 community-governed hospitals including 33 non-profit general acute care hospitals, 2 private psychiatric hospitals, and 1 acute rehabilitation hospital. In addition to acute-care hospital facilities, we also represent 11 home health agencies, 18 skilled nursing facilities, 19 nursing facilities, 12 residential care facilities, and more than 300 physician practices.

Hospitals oppose section 1 of the bill and have no position on section 2.

I negotiated section 1 with former Representative Golden three years ago when this law was enacted. It was purposefully time limited. The purpose of the data collection was to help give context to the need for additional services. Now that those services are up and running and you have actual data on demand for services, we don't see the point of collecting this data any further.

We reached out to DHHS to understand the need for the data and have not received a response. The law requires DHHS to produce a report each February 1, I don't see a report for either 2021 or 2020 on the DHHS website; obviously, it may have been done, but I have not seen it. Nor do I see the report on the Bureau of Veteran's Services website.

There is no reason to believe that two more years of data will really tell us anything we don't already know; this is particularly true if you extend the provision of services (section 2).

Thank you for accepting these comments.