

MaineHealth

MaineHealth Member Organizations:

Franklin Community Health Network
LincolnHealth
MaineHealth Care At Home
Maine Behavioral Healthcare Memorial Hospital
Maine Medical Center
NorDx
Pen Bay Medical Center
Southern Maine Health Care
Synernet
Waldo County General Hospital
Western Maine Health

Part of the MaineHealth Family:

MaineHealth Accountable Care Organization

MaineHealth Affiliates:

MaineGeneral Health
Mid Coast-Parkview Health
New England Rehabilitation Hospital of Portland
St. Mary's Health System

Honorable Members of the
Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
Cross Building, Room 202
Wednesday, February 6, 2019

Senator Bellows, Representative Sylvester, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing:

On behalf of MaineHealth, I am writing in support of LD 140, "An Act to Facilitate the Employment of Persons with Substance Use Disorder."

MaineHealth is Maine's largest integrated non-profit health care system that provides the full continuum of health care services to the residents of eleven counties in Maine and one in New Hampshire. As part of our vision "Working Together So Maine's Communities are the Healthiest in America," MaineHealth has invested in a system-wide effort to address the opioid epidemic ravaging our communities. As a result, every MaineHealth local health system now provides Integrated Medication Assisted Treatment (IMAT) in their primary care practices for patients with opioid use disorder, and Maine Behavioral Healthcare provides intensive outpatient services for patients who are in acute phases of the disease. In fact, we are proud to report that in FY '18, we treated over 1,000 people in our IMAT program, and our goal is to treat 700 new patients this year.

While we are proud of this work, our clients in recovery need gainful employment in addition to substance use disorder treatment in order to be successful during their recovery journey. Individuals in recovery face barriers to employment, including stigma, gaps in employment, and sometimes, criminal backgrounds that can make it difficult or nearly impossible to return to the workforce. LD 140 would identify best practices for employers to support individuals with substance use disorders. This optional certification could help connect clients in recovery to employers who have adopted practices that support recovery. For example, providing flexibility to attend appointments, and addressing stigma with the workforce are two important policies that support workers in recovery.

One question that I ask you to address is the proposed location of this bill in statute. As presented, the language in this bill would be added to Title 26, Section 1404, "Migrant and Immigrant Worker Project." I suggest that the Committee review this location to see if there is a more appropriate location for the language.

It will take a multifaceted approach to address this epidemic ravaging our communities, including treatment, peer support, access to reliable

transportation, employment, access to health care and stable housing. If passed, LD 140 will take a step towards addressing one critical piece of this response by helping to connect those in recovery with gainful employment. For that reason, I urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on the concept of LD 140, "An Act to Facilitate the Employment of Persons with Substance Use Disorder."

As always, please let me know if you need additional information or if you have any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie".

Katie Fullam Harris
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs
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