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## Center for Psychiatric Research

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Maine Medical Center  
Research Institute



### **PROGRAM FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL PROTECTIVE MECHANISMS**

April 24, 2019

Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Health and Human Services Cross Building, Room 209 Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am writing in support of LD 1461, “An Act to Support Early Interventions and Treatment of Mental Health Disorders.”

My career as a clinical social worker began in 1992 in outpatient community mental health in Saco, ME. I subsequently worked in Child Psychiatry at Maine Medical Center for 8 years prior to pursuing my Ph.D. in psychology at Harvard University. I returned to Maine in 2018 as a Faculty Scientist at Maine Medical Center Research Institute conducting research in the early detection and course of major mental illness.

Over these 26 years, I have witnessed Maine take an important national and international leadership role in advancing the care of young people at imminent risk for and in the early phases of psychotic disorders. With scientific evidence establishing coordinated specialty care (CSC) as the recommended treatment for young people experiencing a first episode of psychosis, CSC has received substantial and long-awaited federal support. Youth in the Greater Portland area have benefitted from this support through the single CSC program in Maine, the PIER program. However, expansion of this care to all Maine youth, and beyond the limits of time-limited federal grants is needed. This bill offers Maine a chance to resume its leadership role.

Passing this bill will improve the chances that Maine youth in the early stages of a psychotic disorder will receive the comprehensive care needed to help them make the successful transition to a meaningful and productive adulthood.

Passing this bill will also support the community-based infrastructure (well-trained clinical teams across the state) to leverage additional funds from service and research grants.

I am writing to ask you to make early intervention in major mental illness a priority in Maine, just as prevention of physical illness is a priority. Passing this bill will have long-lasting effects for Maine's youth, for preventing traumatizing and expensive hospitalizations, for assuring their opportunity to contribute to Maine's economy, and for strengthening Maine's scientific and therapeutic resources and leadership.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions. Please support LD 1461.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristen A. Woodberry". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Kristen A. Woodberry, MSW, Ph.D.