

Testimony of Katie Fullam Harris

MaineHealth

In Support of LD 1430

“An Act to Develop a

Statewide Resource and Referral Center and Develop Hub-andd-spoke Models to Improve Access,
Treatment and Recovery for Those with Substance Abuse Disorder”

Senator Brakey, Representative Hymanson and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Katie Fullam Harris of MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in support of this bill.

MaineHealth is an integrated health care delivery system serving ten counties in Maine and Carroll County in New Hampshire. In 2016, MaineHealth embarked upon an ambitious effort to do its part in addressing the opioid epidemic through a multi-faceted approach that addresses prescribing of opioids, education of providers and patients, and the treatment of individuals with opioid use disorder.

As we implement the model, it has become clear that one important role that the State can and should play is in overseeing a resource and referral center (or tool) that is available 24/7 to patients, families and loved ones who are seeking help. 211 may be a reasonable vehicle to provide this resource, but it is desperately needed.

In conjunction with the need to have a coordinated referral entity, we also need to ensure that those in need have immediate access to treatment. The hub and spoke model identified in the bill provides an evidence-based approach to treatment that efficiently utilizes behavioral health specialists and primary care clinicians to provide a continuum of treatment options for patients a in need.

This model has been embraced by Maine’s leading health systems, and we ask the Legislature to encourage the Department of Health and Human Services to support its implementation, as well.

Thank you, and I would be happy to answer questions.