

# 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

## Testimony of Ron Young, Psy.D.

### Maine Behavioral Healthcare

### In Support of LD 1135

### “Resolve, to Increase Funding for Assertive Community Treatment”

April 9, 2019

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Dr. Ron Young, Senior Director of Intensive Services at Maine Behavioral Healthcare, and I am here to testify in support of LD 1135, “Resolve, to Increase Funding for Assertive Community Treatment.”

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 mission of “Working Together So Maine’s Communities are the Healthiest in America,” MaineHealth, which includes Maine Behavioral Healthcare (MBH), is committed to creating a seamless system of behavioral healthcare across Maine, coordinating hospital psychiatric care with community-based treatment services, and better access to behavioral healthcare through integration with primary care services.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) is an intensive community-based treatment program with a multi-disciplinary team of providers that supports MaineCare eligible adults who have a major mental illness diagnosis and often co-occurring disorders. The goal of the ACT Program is to improve the client’s ability to independently manage their lives, while strengthening family, work, school and community ties. MBH has five ACT teams in Springvale, Biddeford, Portland (2), and Brunswick, which serve York, Cumberland and Lincoln Counties.

For example, MBH’s ACCESS Program is a treatment-focused, co-occurring ACT team that serves clients in Cumberland County and is offered to clients who have not had success in recovery through more traditional mental health service. It involves multiple contacts with various team providers each week and the team treats a variety of conditions, including serious mental health symptoms, trauma and addiction. Individualized service plans are developed with each client, and treatment is offered both in the community and at the office, where multiple groups and weekly medication administration create a supportive community recovery environment. Services include 24/7 crisis support and complex medical issues are addressed through collaborative partnerships with medical providers, integrating psychiatric, addiction, and medical treatments.

Each ACT team at MBH has encountered great stress related to the required number of contacts that are needed to be made (average of three contacts per week), while finding a balance of delivering meaningful and outcome focused

care on an ongoing basis. A 25% reimbursement rate increase would significantly assist the teams with adding resources in the form of staff and training to deepen the value and quality of the service provided by allowing increased intensity of care with each individual (as appropriate) and less focused on a prescriptive “meet the numbers” approach that can happen when resources are chronically eroded.

This rate increase will also allow for an increase of intentionally focused contacts that will deepen the quality of care. For example, currently when staff are on vacation, ill, or in between hiring for required positions, the team is significantly stretched to provide the optimal care for the clients enrolled with ACT. Having additional revenue to provide additional staffing will ensure seamless care is being provided during these moments. In rural areas, it is also critically important to understand that care would be greatly enhanced with additional staff to provide care in outreach situations where travel time impinges on the time available to provide the care itself. The more staff hours available, the more outreach and intentional support can occur in the community where the clients live.

For those reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1135, “Resolve, to Increase Funding for Assertive Community Treatment.” Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.