

Health and Human Services Committee
c/o Kerri Withee, Legislative Information Office
Cross Building, Room 209
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and other members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

RE: LD 674: *An Act To Support Early Intervention and Treatment of Psychotic Disorders*

We represent NASW Maine to urge you to support LD 674. Many of the 5,000 licensed social workers in Maine provide clinical or case management services to patients and families experiencing early to late psychotic disorders. Many of us have witnessed schizophrenia and bipolar disorder robbing promising youth of amazing futures and the sequelae of successful and unsuccessful treatment of these conditions.

In her 30+ year role as a clinical social worker, Julie has witnessed the travesties and the rewards experienced by persons with psychotic disorders, with early treatment being a major factor as to which road the person and families end up taking.

The evidence shows that Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) treatment and supports can help prevent full-onset of psychotic disorders and is associated with significant improvements in education, employment (Nossel, 2018), psychological wellbeing and mental health recovery (Brown, 2017). Early intervention of CSC also has tremendous benefits to families, schools, and the legal system.

In her work with forensic clients, Alicia sees way too often how early intervention and proper care could have ensured the safety of her clients and their families who often had early signs and symptoms of a mental illness. It is not uncommon for a family to share that they had tried for years to get a loved one's care or get someone to listen to them to no avail. They are saddened that it took the commission of crime to finally get their loved ones the care they so desperately needed.

We urge you to support LD 674 to ensure bundled care reimbursement of this evidenced-based approach to Early Intervention and Treatment of Psychotic Disorders.

Respectfully submitted,

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References:

Nossel, I, Wall, MM, Scodes, J, Marino, LA, Zilkha, S, Bello, I, Malinovsky, I, Lee, R, Radigan, M, Smith, TE, Sederer, L, Gu, G, Dixon, L. Results of a coordinated specialty care program for early psychosis and predictors of outcomes. *Psychiatric Services*. 2018. 69(8):863-870. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201700436.

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