



## Consumer Council System of Maine

### A Voice for Consumer of Mental Health Services

[www.maineccsm.org](http://www.maineccsm.org)

LD 897

An Act To Amend the Application Process for the Progressive Treatment Program  
Hearing before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
April 29, 201

Good morning, Honorable Senator McCormick, Representative Burgess, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

I am Vickie McCarty speaking on behalf of the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). The CCSM was established by the 123<sup>rd</sup> Legislature as an independent public instrumentality (Title 34B, §3611) to provide an effective, independent consumer voice in the development of public policy, resource allocation, the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services.

We are testifying today in opposition to LD 897, An Act To Amend the Application Process for the Progressive Treatment Program.

This bill raises some serious questions that would impact persons for whom it is intended. For example, it is not clear why there should be a change in who is qualified to obtain an order for admittance to a progressive treatment program. Is the intention to make it easier to commit individuals with a serious and persistent mental illness? If so, it appears that less qualified people will be allowed to determine the status of another person's degree of wellness. This opens up the potential for abuse because motives for petitioning the court in this regard may not always be ethical or in the best interest of the person for whom PTP is being mandated. Previous language in this bill specified superintendent, chief administrative officer of a psychiatric hospital, the commissioner or director of an ACT Team. These are people whose professional capacity wouldn't allow for subjective opinions that could create great harm to the person(s) it is intended for. Individuals in the above mentioned positions also possess a higher level of skill sets in the mental health field. The proposed change to replace these positions with health officer, law enforcement agent or any other person is very vague and not specific to what qualifies them to make such an assessment. Who could any other person be? Is it a spouse, child, sibling, or a neighbor? Persons who are close to another person do not always have an objective viewpoint. Again, this could set up a potential situation for abuse in the absence of any preliminary clinical assessment or intervention.

Therefore we urge that that this bill amending the application process for the Progressive Treatment Program ought not to pass. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this bill.