

Autism Society of Maine

Legislative Alert #4!

For the weeks of January 27-31 and February 3-7

The Board of the Autism Society of Maine is following a number of bills this legislative session that affect individuals on the Autism spectrum and that we believe may be of interest to our members. We are providing this **Legislative Alert** to make sure you are aware of the bills we are following that are scheduled for a Public Hearing or a Work Session during the weeks of January 27-31 and February 3-7. Click on the LD number to be linked to the Legislature's bill status web site to obtain more information on any of these bills, including the text of the bills and amendments, testimony from previous public hearings, sponsors, committee members and much more!

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Cross Office Building, Room 209.

For more information on any of these bills, click on the LD number or call the committee clerk at (207) 287-1317 or the Legislative Information Office at (207) 287-1692.

You can also listen on-line to any of these meeting by connecting to the Legislative audio broadcast page found [here](#).

HHS Bills voted or tabled unassigned

[LD 1031](#) Voted OTP-AM on 1/21/14. Not yet reported out.

[LD 1552](#) Voted (divided report) on 1/23/14. Not yet reported out.

[LD 1578](#) (Tabled on 1/22/14 pending additional fiscal information. No future work session date assigned) *An Act to Increase Health Security by Expanding Federally Funded Health Care for Maine People*. Sponsored by Speaker Eves.

Summary. This bill proposes to expand medical coverage under the MaineCare program to adults who qualify under federal law with incomes up to 133% of the non-farm income official poverty line, with the 5% federal income adjustment for family size, and qualifies Maine to receive federal funding for 100% of the cost of coverage for members who enroll under the expansion. (See bill status for full summary of the bill).

[LD 1582](#) (Tabled on 1/22/14 pending further information. No future work session date assigned) *Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 101, MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter III, Section 32: Allowances for Waiver Services for Children with Intellectual Disabilities or Pervasive Developmental Disorders, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Health and Human Services*. Submitted by Representative Farnsworth.

Summary. This resolve provides for legislative review of portions of Chapter 101, MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter III, Section 32: Allowances for Waiver Services for Children with Intellectual

Disabilities or Pervasive Developmental Disorders, a major substantive rule of the Department of Health and Human Services.

[LD 1583](#) (Voted OTP on 1/22/14. Not yet reported out)

[LD 1584](#) (Voted OTP on 1/22/14. Not yet reported out)

[LD 1636](#) (Work Session held on 2PM 1/16/14 – Tabled to an unspecified later date) *An Act to Provide more Efficient and Reliable Transportation for MaineCare Members*. Sponsored by Senator Lachowicz

Summary. This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to implement a new system to contract for and provide non-emergency transportation for MaineCare members within 30 days after the effective date of the bill. The bill requires the new system to use sole source contracts with regional public transportation agencies that had agreements on July 31, 2013 to provide MaineCare transportation services.

[LD 1663](#) (Work Session held on 2PM 1/16/14 – Tabled to an unspecified later date) *An Act To Terminate a MaineCare Transportation Contract*. Sponsored by Senator Jackson

Summary. This bill is a “Concept Draft” that directs the DHHS to terminate the existing contracts for MaineCare transportation services/

Tuesday, January 28th

No Autism related bills scheduled

Wednesday, January 29th

No Autism related bills scheduled

Thursday, January 30th

[LD 1682](#) (Public Hearing 1 PM 1/30/14) *An Act to Preserve Head Start and Child Care Services*. Sponsored by Representative Frey.

Summary. This bill provides for the allocation of funding among Maine's 11 nontribal Head Start programs based on a formula that provides a base allocation to each program and distributes all remaining funding based on the number of children in poverty in each program's service area. The bill also provides a \$2,000,000 appropriation to state Head Start programs in fiscal year 2014-15, fully replacing the cut that was made in fiscal year 2012-13. These funds will allow the State to maximize child care development fund block grants to provide child care vouchers.

[LD 1685](#) (Public Hearing 1PM 1/30/14) *An Act to Ensure that all Maine Children are protected from Abuse and Neglect*. Sponsored by Representative Farnsworth.

Summary. This bill makes the following changes to the laws governing the protection of children from abuse and neglect.

1. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services, in the case of an abuse and neglect investigation involving an allegation of abuse and neglect outside of the home of the child, to

investigate whether a licensing violation has occurred.

2. It requires a public or private agency or program that is administered, licensed or funded by the Department of Education that hires staff or selects volunteers and provides care or services for children to develop a written policy regarding child abuse and neglect.

3. It requires that a child protection petition, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect outside of the home of the child, include the name and address of the caregiver and the address of the place in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred.

4. It allows a court in a protection order to order the removal of a perpetrator from a setting outside of the home of the child.

5. It provides a criminal penalty for the violation of a provision of a protection order that prohibits a person from entering the out-of-home setting of the abuse or neglect.

6. It amends the laws governing the investigative duties of the out-of-home abuse and neglect investigating team and clarifies the duty of the team to eliminate the collection of redundant information to the extent possible. It specifies that the team must complete an investigation of issues involving licensure within 6 months from the start of the investigation in most cases. It requires the team to include relevant professionals outside the Department of Health and Human Services or service center as members of the team for investigations of schools or other settings that provide supervisory care for children. It specifies that, in the case of an allegation of abuse and neglect outside of the home of a child in a facility or by a person not subject to licensure by the department, the team must refer the case to the agency or department charged with the responsibility to conduct a separate investigation to determine if licensure or certification action is necessary.

Tuesday, February 4th

No Autism related bills scheduled

Wednesday, February 5th

[LD 1683](#) (Public Hearing 9AM 2/5/14) *An Act to Improve Degree and Career Attainment for Former Foster Children*. Sponsored by Representative Berry.

Summary. This bill raises the upper age limit, from 20 years of age to 26 years of age, for voluntary participation in extended care for persons who attained 18 years of age while in the care and custody of the State. The bill also directs the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters to annually request an organization with expertise in foster care to provide to the committee a report and briefing on the implementation of the law.

[LD 1598](#) (Public Hearing 1PM 2/5/14) *An Act to Improve Access to Behavioral Health Services and Increase Public Safety*. Sponsored by Representative Farnsworth

Summary. This bill amends the laws concerning the rights and basic protections of a person with an intellectual disability or autism.

[LD 1704](#) (Public Hearing 1PM 2/5/14) *An Act to Improve the Use of Dental Services by MaineCare-eligible Children*. Sponsored by Senator Vitelli.

Summary. This bill amends the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 3174-S to require the Department of Health and Human Services to include in its annual report to the joint standing

committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters the number of MaineCare-eligible children who receive dental services annually and what services they are provided and also to report quarterly to the Commissioner of Health and Human Services the names of MaineCare-eligible children from birth to 20 years of age who are not receiving dental services. The bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services, through the department's office of MaineCare services in cooperation with the dental care community, to design a pilot program to increase the use of dental services by MaineCare-eligible children. The bill also requires the Department of Health and Human Services to submit a report regarding the pilot program to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters no later than November 5, 2014. The joint standing committee may report out a bill to the First Regular Session of the 127th Legislature.

Joint Standing Committee on Insurance and Financial Services

Cross Office Building, Room 220.

For more information on any of these bills, click on the LD number or call the committee clerk at (207) 287-1317 or the Legislative Information Office at (207) 287-1314 or the Legislative information Office at (207) 287-1692

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IFS Bills voted or tabled unassigned

[LD 347](#) (Tabled on 1/23/14 pending receipt of additional fiscal information. No future work session date established) *An Act To Amend Insurance Coverage for Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders* . Sponsored by Senator Lachowicz

Summary. This bill proposes to expand health insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorders from persons 5 years of age or younger to persons 21 years of age or under. The committee is currently considering an amendment that would lower the proposed upper age limit from 21 years of age or under to 10 years of age or under. They have tabled this bill pending receipt of fiscal information about the cost of this proposed amendment.

[LD 1367](#). (Voted as a divided report on 1/15/14. Not yet reported out). *An Act to Require Health Insurance Carriers and the MaineCare Program to Cover the Cost of Transition Services to Bridge the Gap Between High School and Independence*. Sponsored by Representative Graham.

Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development

Cross Office Building, Room 208

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LCRED Bills voted or tabled unassigned

[LD 1310](#) (Voted as a divided report on 1/9/14. Not yet reported out). *An Act to Improve Access to Dental Care through the Establishment of the Maine Board of Oral Health*. Sponsored by Representative Volk.

Thursday, January 30th

[LD 1677](#) (Work Session 1PM 1/30/14) *An Act to make Minor Technical Changes to the Laws Governing the Department of Labor*. Sponsored by Representative Volk

Summary. This bill makes minor technical corrections and clarifications to the statutes that govern the Department of Labor, including:

1. Correcting a reference to workers' compensation payments made to employees;
2. Updating the law to reflect the current disposition of federal funds received pursuant to the federal Wagner-Peyser Act;
3. Correcting references to entities within the department that were abolished or merged into another entity;
4. Correcting a conflict in the law created when 2 public laws amended the same section of law in different ways;
5. Renaming a standing committee of the State Workforce Investment Board the Commission on Disability and Employment;
6. Removing language specifying the appointment process and terms for members of the Program Policy Committee, a standing committee of the State Workforce Investment Board; and
7. Allowing all standing committees of the State Workforce Investment Board to receive funds and other things of value to allow the standing committees to carry out the purposes of the State Workforce Investment Board.

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at:

Autism Society of Maine
72B Main Street
Winthrop, ME 04364
(207) 377-9603 or 800273-5200
FAX (207) 377-9434
Email: asm@asmonline.org
www.asmonline.org