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May 11, 2011

To: Health and Human Services Committee

RE: LD 31

RE: LD 746

The Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians is extremely concerned about the impact of these bills on the health and welfare of Maine's youth. As psychiatrists, we see the worst of what families can do to each other—parents who abuse substances and neglect their kids or who don't want family secrets of sexual or physical abuse revealed. We see parents who sell or take their kids' prescriptions. We see girls who end up pregnant by adult family members.

As I said in my oral testimony before this committee, these bills will have the most deleterious impact on adolescents who come from dysfunctional families, kids who are trying to act more responsibly than the adults in their lives. If you take away the ability of these kids to seek treatment and preventive services, you are adding one more nail to the coffin of their chances in life. As psychiatrists, we work very hard to encourage healthy communication within families, but there are times when it is just not safe to do that. Young people from unsafe families need to be able to access care on their own initiative.

Our Association hopes you think long and hard about the harm that these bills could do to teens who are already struggling against long odds. We opposed both bills.

Contact:

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