



Legislative Questionnaire Introduction

Dear Legislative Candidate,

With over 30 members, the Alliance represents the majority of Maine's licensed community mental health and substance use treatment agencies. Our member agencies are in communities throughout the State and provide essential services to individuals and families, as well as jobs to Mainers. Our membership employs over 5,500 Maine people, who in 2017 provided well over 5 million service hours to over 100,000 Maine people.

The Alliance supports implementation of policies and practices which serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral healthcare system. The Alliance represents its members in advancing prevention, treatment and recovery-oriented systems of care for mental illness and substance use disorder through advocacy, leadership, and professional development.

Substance use and addiction, whether to opioids, alcohol, or other drugs, is one of Maine's most costly and prevalent public health problems. Its medical, social and economic consequences are enormous and rapidly escalating. The last comprehensive estimate of the overall cost to Maine of substance use disorder was conducted in 2013 using 2010 data, and the tally was \$1.4 billion.¹ Maine simply cannot afford to place less than a priority focus on substance use treatment and recovery in all populations, and in all areas of Maine, in this new administration.

Similarly, our mental health treatment system is breaking under the weight of the recent spike in suicide rates, escalating numbers of children stranded in emergency departments seeking mental health treatment, and the growing waiting lists for basic mental health medication management and evidence-based home and community treatment for youth.

The Alliance has developed a questionnaire on mental health and substance use in Maine which we hope you will fill out and return to us with your understanding of the current state of behavioral health service delivery in Maine and your vision for the future. Answers will be shared with our membership to help educate them as they assess the legislative field of candidates.

In the coming days, we hope that you will use the Alliance as an important expert resource. We urge you to rely on the Alliance as important and valued associates, experts in the field of mental illness and substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery when you begin to address these issues, and develop policies and plans to most effectively meet the needs of Mainers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding this questionnaire. And please do not hesitate to contact the Alliance with any questions or ideas regarding these essential services.

We are sincere in our request to work with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malory Shaughnessy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Malory Shaughnessy
Executive Director

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/pubs/data/2013/Cost2010-final%20Apr%2010%2013.pdf>

Candidate Information:

Candidate's name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Campaign Phone: _____ Campaign Email: _____

Office Sought: _____ Party Affiliation: _____

Name and title of person completing this form: _____

Legislative Questionnaire

General Questions:

1. Please (if you feel comfortable), share any connections or experience (professional or personal) you have with prevention, treatment or recovery for mental illness or substance use disorder.

2. In your opinion, is health care a basic right? **Yes** **No** **Comments:** _____

3. Recent news coverage of the system of care for mental health and substance use in Maine shows a system that is fragmented and underfunded. There are also many people who are insured, but with deductibles in the thousands of dollars for themselves and their families. These people are considered "underinsured," and paying out of pocket for behavioral health treatment is a barrier to receiving the care they need. Do you support additional investment in the Maine behavioral healthcare system for the underinsured? **Yes** **No**

Comments: _____

The Role of the State:

4. Do you think that the state has a specific role to play in the prevention, treatment or recovery of mental illness or substance use disorder? **Yes** **No** **Comments:** _____

5. Should the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services have a strategic plan for addressing the behavioral health of Mainers?

Yes **No** **Comments:** _____

6. The state receives federal block grant dollars for specific purposes such as the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant to plan, implement, and evaluate activities that prevent and treat substance use disorder and promote public health or the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant to provide comprehensive, community-based mental health services to adults with serious mental illnesses and to children with serious emotional disturbances, as well as to monitor progress in implementing a comprehensive, community-based mental health system. Do you believe that there should be transparency in how these, and other, block grant dollars are allocated by the state? **YES NO**

a. If so, would you support legislation to mandate an annual reporting to the legislative committee of oversight? **YES NO**

Comment: _____

b. Are you familiar with the Quality Improvement Council and its role with these two block grants listed above? **YES NO Comments:** _____

Regarding MaineCare:

7. Medicaid expansion had passed at the ballot box and the law has been reaffirmed in the courts. There is a considerable economic and human impact on the decision to accept or reject the federal funding. Over 70,000 uninsured Mainers would benefit and our healthcare economy would receive roughly \$500 million each year. Do you support funding MaineCare expansion based on income alone? **Yes No Comment:** _____

8. When we talk about access to medical or behavioral healthcare, we often only talk about having insurance or an ability to pay for care. However, there are two sides to having access to care – there is the ability to have care paid for, BUT there is also the need to have access to providers that will provide the care. If the rates paid to providers does not cover the cost of the care given, they cannot continue to maintain their care services. Do you understand the negative implications of this dynamic on access? **Yes No Comments:** _____

9. Do you think that current MaineCare reimbursement rates cover the full costs of delivering the services covered? **Yes No**

a. If not, do you think that MaineCare should cover the full costs of providing the services covered? **Yes No**

b. If not, would you call for new rate studies to be conducted utilizing data derived from actual provider costs? **Yes No**

Comments: _____

10. States are increasingly looking to move away from volume-driven fee-for-service payments and toward value-based payment (VBP) arrangements. Instead of being paid by the number of visits and tests they order (fee-for-service), providers' payments are moving to be based on the value of care they deliver, while working to lower the overall cost. Do you support a change to VBP?

Yes No Comments: _____

11. Currently, care management or case coordination is not a covered service for most people struggling with mental illness of substance use disorder, yet too often finding the specialists and treatment supports, or housing and transportation arrangements needed, can be overwhelming for someone in this position. Would you support legislation expanding MaineCare coverage of this service? **Yes No Comments:** _____

Specific Issues in Behavioral Health:

12. Some Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) in behavioral healthcare carry a larger price tag due to many factors such as continual training of the practitioners, high fidelity to the model of care, increased documentation and reporting, etc. Do you support increasing MaineCare rates to expand these models of care? **Yes No Comments:** _____

13. The system for mental health treatment for Maine youth is overburdened and underfunded. Recently, news reports cited more than 800 children waiting for just three home and community based programs alone. For other services the waiting lists are not tracked, so it is not known the true numbers of families waiting for help.² There are also children stuck in Emergency Departments awaiting placement in appropriate residential facilities, or confined to Longcreek due to no other available residential placement slots. Would you support legislation mandating a full review of the system of children's mental health coverage in Maine? **Yes No**

Comments: _____

14. What exists today of Maine's system for serving children with mental illness has its roots in key actions in the courts in the mid-1990s.³

² <https://bangordailynews.com/2018/06/04/mainefocus/hundreds-of-children-wait-for-mental-health-help-even-after-maine-pledged-to-follow-the-law/>

³ <https://bangordailynews.com/2018/06/04/mainefocus/maines-history-of-serving-and-not-serving-children-with-mental-health-needs/>

- a. Are you familiar with the Risinger v. Concannon lawsuit?⁴ **Yes No**
- b. Are you familiar with the AMHI Consent Decree?⁵ **Yes No**

Comments: _____

15. In 2016, 226 Maine people died of suicide – a rate of 16.97 per 100,000 of population. That’s well above the national average of 13.84 and far beyond the New England average of 11.8. The rate in Maine has increased by more than 27 percent since 1999 with suicide now the second leading cause of death for 15-to-34-year-olds in Maine.⁶ The Department of Health and Human Services recently made major changes to the system for mental health crisis services without provider or public input (see article cited).⁷ Many providers are concerned that these changes will reduce access to these services over time. Would you support legislation to conduct a full review of this system of care to assure it remains sustainable? **Yes No**

Comments: _____

16. The opioid crisis has received much needed coverage in the news and focus from task forces and community coalitions, and yet the death toll of overdoses continues apace. In 2017, 418 Mainers died of opioid overdose. The response has not been as swift, nor as comprehensive, as is needed to stem this tide. Do you propose any additional legislation to address this continuing public health crisis? **YES NO Comments:** _____

17. What is your level of support for the following ideas and/or issues?
 (Please circle with 5 being the greatest support and 1 being no support)

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| c. Creation of a Behavioral Health Cabinet (with Commissioners of Education, Corrections, Health and Human Services, Public Safety, and Labor) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Establishing a MaineCare rate review commission | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Establishing Safe-injection sites | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Medication-assisted treatment in a corrections setting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Re-establishing the Children’s Cabinet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

18. Is there anything you would like to add? _____

⁴ <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4493290-French-v-Concannon-Docket-Report.html>
⁵ <https://drme.org/assets/brochures/CD-Presentation.pdf>
⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Violent Death Reporting System
⁷ <https://bangordailynews.com/2018/05/30/mainefocus/dhhs-quietly-overhauls-aid-for-children-adults-in-crisis/>

