

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

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Legislative Document

No. 1236

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H.P. 784

House of Representatives, March 21, 2023

**An Act to Increase the Provision of Children's Behavioral Health  
Services in Rural Areas and to Provide Support for Families of  
Children Receiving Services**

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Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative MADIGAN of Waterville.  
Cosponsored by Senator GROHOSKI of Hancock and  
Representatives: GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, PERRY of Calais, RISEMAN of  
Harrison.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §4041, sub-§4** is enacted to read:

3 **4. Family team meetings.** The department shall convene a meeting, facilitated by a  
4 neutral party, with all parents, the guardian ad litem of the child, providers of behavioral  
5 health services to the child, the child when appropriate, the caseworker, the caseworker's  
6 supervisor and any other interested party in the following circumstances:

7 A. Prior to filing a preliminary protection order pursuant to section 4034;

8 B. For families determined at risk and engaged in prevention service family plans  
9 developed by the department; and

10 C. To evaluate efforts and progress made on achieving the elements of a rehabilitation  
11 and reunification plan under subsection 1-A, paragraph A, subparagraph (1), division  
12 (c).

13 **Sec. 2. Department of Health and Human Services to increase availability**  
14 **of children's behavioral health services in rural areas.** The Department of Health  
15 and Human Services, referred to in this section as "the department," shall increase the  
16 availability of children's behavioral health services for families involved in the child  
17 welfare system. The department shall do the following.

18 1. No later than January 1, 2024, the department shall amend its rules in Chapter 101:  
19 MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter III, Sections 28 and 65 to establish reimbursement  
20 rates for providers of behavioral health services to children in families in rural areas  
21 involved in the child welfare system. The rural reimbursement rate must be sufficient to  
22 allow for the additional travel time required to serve children in rural areas.

23 2. The department shall offer grants or other incentives to children's behavioral health  
24 providers to expand programs into rural areas and serve children in families involved in the  
25 child welfare system.

26 3. The department shall establish a method of reimbursing providers of services to  
27 families involved in the child welfare system to meet together and coordinate services for  
28 each family.

29 **Sec. 3. Family team meetings.** The Department of Health and Human Services  
30 shall fully implement the family team meetings plan that is established in the Maine Family  
31 First Prevention Services State Plan. The department shall develop training for child  
32 welfare staff to act as neutral facilitators. The department shall ensure that all providers of  
33 services to families involved in the child welfare system participate in family team  
34 meetings.

35 **SUMMARY**

36 This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to expand children's  
37 behavioral health services for children in families involved in the child welfare system in  
38 rural areas. It requires the department to amend its rule in Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits  
39 Manual, Chapter III, Sections 28 and 65 to establish a rural reimbursement rate that  
40 includes travel time for providers to rural areas to provide services. It requires the  
41 department to offer grants or other incentives to existing providers to expand services into

1 rural areas. It also requires the department to reimburse providers of services to families  
2 to meet together and coordinate services for each family. The bill also requires the  
3 department to fully implement the family team meetings plan that is in the Maine Family  
4 First Prevention Services State Plan. It requires the department to train and provide neutral  
5 facilitators from child welfare staff for family team meetings.