



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1506

H.P. 961

House of Representatives, April 5, 2023

Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Study the Scarcity of Licensed Clinical Behavioral Health Professionals Across the State

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services suggested and ordered printed.

R(+ B. Hunt

ROBERT B. HUNT Clerk

Presented by Representative SARGENT of York. Cosponsored by Senator INGWERSEN of York and Representatives: CRAFTS of Newcastle, DODGE of Belfast, GOLEK of Harpswell, GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, MADIGAN of Waterville, MATHIESON of Kittery, MEYER of Eliot, Senator: MOORE of Washington. 1 **Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not 2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 Whereas, this legislation must take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period 4 in order for the stakeholder group established by the Department of Health and Human 5 Services pursuant to this legislation to be timely convened; and

6 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within 7 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as 8 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, 9 therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Department of Health and Human Services study required; training 10 and recruitment of clinical behavioral health care professionals. Resolved: 11 That the Department of Health and Human Services shall convene a stakeholder group to 12 study issues related to the training and recruitment of clinical behavioral health care 13 professionals. At a minimum, the department shall invite to be members of the stakeholder 14 15 group representatives of major health care providers in the State, representatives of major behavioral health care providers in the State, representatives of a major mental health 16 17 organization in the State, licensed clinical social workers and licensed professional counselors. The stakeholder group shall review issues related to: the current number of 18 psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, psychological nurse 19 20 practitioners and licensed clinical professional counselors currently practicing in the State; 21 the number of those professionals serving MaineCare patients; the number of additional 22 professionals needed to meet the current unmet need in the State; the state of current waiting lists for mental health treatment; access to educational opportunities to train clinical 23 behavioral health care professionals in the State; costs associated with education programs 24 25 for clinical behavioral health care professionals in the State; methods to enable individuals to work in the clinical behavioral health care field while attaining a degree or certification, 26 27 including opportunities to count time working in the field toward attaining an advanced 28 degree or certification; and ways to recruit clinical behavioral health care professionals from out of state. By December 6, 2023, the department shall submit a report related to the 29 30 study, including recommendations and any suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing 31 Committee on Health and Human Services. The committee may report out a bill relating to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature. 32

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
takes effect when approved.

35 SUMMARY
36 This resolve requires the Department of Health and Human Services to convene a
37 stakeholder group to review issues related to the training and recruitment of clinical
38 behavioral health care professionals. The resolve requires the department to submit a report
39 related to the study to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and
40 authorizes the committee to report out a bill relating to the report.