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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dir. Peter Schleck, Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
FROM: Office of Child and Family Services, Maine DHHS
DATE: February 8, 2023
RE: Information Requested by the Government Oversight Committee

In a letter following the last Government Oversight Committee meeting, you requested that we provide a further breakdown on the hospital stays and hoteling, including how long the average stay was, as well as the status of payments to hospitals, and the “true” costs of hoteling and emergency room stays. As an accompaniment to our January 26, 2024 information, please find additional responses here:

The data on length of stay is identified in the LD 118 data provided to the Committee previously. This data encompasses both children in parental custody and state custody. In a typical month, children in state custody make up 2-3 of the total number identified in the provided data.

OCFS does not track payments to hospitals by MaineCare and not all children are covered by MaineCare. The Office of MaineCare Services plans on addressing reimbursement for youth awaiting placement as part of its rate reform process, although given the complexity, the solution could not be implemented with other hospital rate reforms on July 1, 2024.

The average length of stay for a child in care in a hotel room was 11.5 days. Staff overtime was not reported in specific categories like coverage in hotels during 2023. Additionally, coverage is provided through a mix of caseworkers, support staff, and support from community members; as such, there is not an average hourly rate for coverage.

Hotel costs are paid for by the Department using the same process for all hotel stays (in and out of state travel for employees, hotels for parents and relatives traveling to Maine as part of a child welfare case, etc.). The majority of those stays are at the government rate of \$107 per night but there are sometimes extenuating circumstances based on the child’s needs and seasonal variation of hotel availability that may increase the cost per night. Assuming this average and 658 days in hotels from January through November 2023, the total cost is estimated at roughly \$70,000.