

MaineHealth

MaineHealth Local Health Systems

Franklin Community
Health Network
LincolnHealth
MaineHealth Care At Home
Maine Behavioral Healthcare
Memorial Hospital
Maine Medical Center
Mid Coast-Parkview Health
NorDx
Pen Bay Medical Center
Southern Maine Health Care
Synernet
Waldo County General Hospital
Western Maine Health

Part of the MaineHealth Family

MaineHealth Accountable
Care Organization

MaineHealth Affiliates

MaineGeneral Health
New England Rehabilitation
Hospital of Portland
St. Mary's Health System

Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth in Strong Opposition to LD 624, “An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Tobacco Specialty Stores” Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Sarah Calder, Director of Government Affairs at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in strong opposition to LD 624, “An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Tobacco Specialty Stores.”

MaineHealth is Maine’s largest integrated non-profit health care system that provides a full continuum of health care services to the residents of eleven counties in Maine and one in New Hampshire. Every day, MaineHealth’s over 23,000 employees are committed to fulfilling our vision of “working together so our communities are the healthiest in America.”

LD 624 represents a concept that has been before the Legislature multiple times, in various iterations, since loopholes in Maine’s smoking laws were closed – and the concept has continuously met no success. Previous bills have represented regressive efforts to roll back Maine’s strong support of tobacco-free environments – taking environments exclusive to the sale of tobacco and expanding the scope of service to include the sale and use of alcohol. The legislation before you today continues this regression. Because it runs contrary to overwhelming public opinion that is supportive of tobacco free environments, it is important to note that identical language was defeated by the 129th Legislature

Additionally, allowing smoking in confined spaces can also compromise the use of face masks as someone would need to take the mask off to smoke, which could further contribute to the spread of COVID-19 when a smoker exhales, touches their face, etc.

Because of the factors noted above, I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.