

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 Dr. Maribeth Hourihan, MaineHealth Testimony In Opposition to LD 745 and LD 915 May 18, 2021

Senator Carney, Representative Harnett, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, I am Dr. Maribeth Hourihan and I have been a practicing pediatric cardiologist at Maine Medical Center for more than 27 years. I am here today on behalf of MaineHealth to testify in opposition to both LD 748 and LD 915 as they limit access to abortion services for one category of women in Maine.

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. As part of our mission and vision of "Working Together So Maine's Communities are the Healthiest in America," MaineHealth, we strongly support increasing access to affordable – and lifesaving – health care and medications.

With that in mind, we oppose the legislation before you today for two reasons:

1. First, there are many women covered by MaineCare with serious health conditions that need access to family planning, including abortion services. I have cared for countless adult patients who were born with severe congenital heart disease and many of my patients cannot safely carry a pregnancy. There is too much danger to the mother of irreversibly worsening her heart disease by carrying a pregnancy, or, in some cases, of not surviving the pregnancy because of the congenital heart disease. Additionally, there is, in many cases, a significant danger of the mother delivering a severely premature infant who might then face the medical and financial consequences of that extreme prematurity.

In addition to patients with some forms of severe congenital heart disease, there are several other categories of patients in Maine whose health and sometimes lives are at risk during a pregnancy. This includes patients with pulmonary hypertension, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, dilated cardiomyopathy and some mechanical heart valves. The numbers are not insignificant.

If they find themselves pregnant, many of my patients must have access to safe, legal, and affordable abortion services in order to stay healthy and, in some cases, to stay alive. The choice that they face when they find themselves pregnant is complicated and difficult, and for us to place financial and legal barriers in front of that set of decisions is unthinkable and unacceptable.

2. And finally, as a physician, I stand for equality and justice for my patients. This bill would place significant obstacles on access to potentially life-saving procedures based solely on a patient's income. All of my patients and all of Maine's residents should have access to high quality and affordable health care services, regardless of income or insurance status. We must provide compassion, respect, and the best care to all Maine women – not just those with certain forms of health insurance.

With that said, we urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on these two bills and ensure that all women in Maine – regardless of their health insurance coverage – continue to have access to safe, legal, and affordable abortion services.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.