

# MaineHealth

## MaineHealth Local Health Systems

Franklin Community  
Health Network  
LincolnHealth  
MaineHealth Care At Home  
Maine Behavioral Healthcare  
Memorial Hospital  
Maine Medical Center  
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  
Mid Coast-Parkview Health  
New England Rehabilitation  
Hospital of Portland  
St. Mary's Health System

## Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth In Support of LD 1950 “An Act to Advance Palliative Care Utilization in the State” Monday, January 27, 2020

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson 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 support of LD 1950, “An Act To Advance Palliative Care Utilization in the State.”

MaineHealth is Maine’s largest integrated non-profit health care system that provides the full continuum of health care services to the residents of eleven counties in Maine and one in New Hampshire. MaineHealth palliative care programs are committed to helping patients facing serious illnesses live their lives as fully as possible. It is important to note that palliative care can be provided at any stage of an illness, from diagnosis through the end of life. Patients do not have to forego treatment to receive palliative care.

It should come as no surprise that there is a significant need to expand palliative care services in the State, in particular in rural areas (*Prevalence of Palliative Care in Maine*, 2016 Maine Hospice Council survey). In an effort to help address this shortfall, Maine Medical Center’s Hospice and Palliative Care Fellowship was established in 2013. This program is a one year training program in adult palliative medicine, fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), and presently enrolls two fellows per year. The principal training sites are Maine Medical Center, the Veterans Administration Hospital in Augusta and Hospice of Southern Maine.

While palliative care is currently covered by MaineCare, the reimbursement rate is not sufficient to maintain or expand services throughout the state. In fact, MaineCare reimburses palliative care at 43% of the Medicare rate. We strongly support the goal of this legislation that MaineCare reimbursement policies promote high-value palliative care and urge the Committee to consider raising the current MaineCare reimbursement rate to Medicare rates.

We do, however, have concerns with some elements of the legislation, including the standardization of palliative care delivery as certification and accreditation standards already exist. Additionally, we do not believe it is appropriate or necessary to name individual members of the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Advisory Council.

With these changes, MaineHealth supports the intent of LD 1950, “An Act to Advance Palliative Care Utilization in the State.” Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.