

MaineHealth

**Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth
In Support of LD 439, “Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of
Health and Human Services to Convene a Task Force to Study the
Need for Long-term Acute Care Hospital”
Monday, February 25, 2019**

**MaineHealth Member
Organizations:**

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

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 439, “Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to Convene a Task Force to Study the Need for Long-term Acute Care Hospital.”

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. Every day MaineHealth’s local health systems are challenged with discharging patients to the next appropriate level of care due in part to the lack of long-term acute care beds in the State of Maine. As a result, patients that require long-term ventilator support and/or have complex medical care beyond the skill sets of any acute rehabilitation hospitals in Maine are often transferred out of state to a long-term acute care hospital equipped to care for these patients. Transferring these vulnerable patients hundreds of miles from their homes can cause disruption in their support system and suffering for their families.

For example, Maine Medical Center recently cared for two patients in the Assisted Ventilation Unit that lived at the hospital for years (5 years and 7 years respectively) before eventually passing away. This story is not unique. There are countless examples of patients that are currently living or have lived in MaineHealth hospitals for months at a time because facilities in the State are not equipped to care for their complex medical needs.

For those reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 439, so that a comprehensive study can be conducted to evaluate the need for long-term acute care beds in the State. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.