

MaineHealth

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MaineHealth Care At Home
Maine Behavioral Healthcare
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Maine Medical Center
NorDx
Pen Bay Medical Center
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MaineHealth Affiliates:

MaineGeneral Health
Mid Coast-Parkview Health
New England Rehabilitation
Hospital of Portland
St. Mary's Health System

**Testimony of Nicoleta Toma, MD
Preventive Medicine Fellow at Maine Medical Center
In Support of LD 493
“An Act To Provide Lung Cancer Counseling and
Screening for MaineCare Recipients”
Wednesday, March 20, 2019**

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Nicoleta Toma, a first year Preventive Medicine Fellow at Maine Medical Center, and I am here today to testify in support of LD 493, “An Act To Provide Lung Cancer Counseling and Screening for MaineCare Recipients.”

Through my current fellowship, I became involved with the MaineHealth Lung Cancer Screening Task Force, and spent the summer traveling throughout the state to identify barriers to connecting patients to lung cancer screening. While doing this work, I became aware that MaineCare was not covering (at the time) low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) for lung cancer screening, even though this screening was recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force. During this time, I coincidentally had the opportunity and pleasure to meet Senator Roger Katz at the State House, and ask him about his proposed LD 720 (An Act To Provide Lung Cancer Screening for Maine Care Recipients), and listened to his passionate response about the bill and how it had died on the Appropriations Table.

Since then, I have followed the issue closely, and am very happy to know that MaineCare now covers lung cancer screening for eligible patients. I strongly believe this will lead to decreased mortality from lung cancer in the state of Maine by earlier disease detection. However, barriers, such as the requirement of a prior authorization, still remain. I have taken care of many MaineCare patients in my work as a primary care provider and ordered various other tests that require prior authorization. I can personally attest that prior authorizations take time to complete, and can lead to delays in testing. In most cases, MaineCare patients are a more challenging and high-risk patient population, who frequently are underserved and difficult to engage, and it is critically important that we

remove any additional barriers to screening for lung cancer in these patients.

For those reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 493, "An Act To Provide Lung Cancer Counseling and Screening for MaineCare Recipients." Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.