

MaineHealth

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

Joint Select Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
State House, Room 228
Monday, April 9, 2018

Senator Hamper, Representative Gattine and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

I am sorry not to be able to attend today's hearing to voice my support for this bill in person, but please accept this letter on behalf of MaineHealth, 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, in support of LD 837, which establishes the new positions necessary to handle the increased workload due to the expansion of eligibility in MaineCare.

As part of our mission of "Working Together So Maine's Communities are the Healthiest in America," MaineHealth's members are committed to providing access to health care services to all patients, including those who lack any or adequate insurance. That commitment, however, is becoming increasingly difficult to fulfill, as the number of patients who lack insurance grows while reimbursement from the state and federal government declines (hospitals in Maine have absorbed almost \$550 million in Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement cuts since 2010).

Without the quick implementation of expanded MaineCare eligibility, MaineHealth will continue to be challenged with real questions regarding how long we can sustain our mission of providing access to comprehensive care for all patients, regardless of their insurance status. In fact, when taken together, Maine's 33 acute care hospitals had a combined operating margin of \$29.4 million in Fiscal Year 2016, but if you exclude the two largest hospitals, Maine Medical Center in Portland and Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, the remaining Maine hospitals lost \$50.7 million. Simply put, this scenario is not sustainable.

While expanding Medicaid through a referendum process would not have been our preferred way of achieving this policy goal, the residents of Maine have spoken and Maine's uninsured residents continue to need care. As Maine's hospital systems struggle to provide quality treatment to all in need, it is critical that the Legislature act promptly and thoughtfully to minimize the impact on state resources and maximize federal funds to support their care

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The Department of Health and Human Services needs the increased human resources provided in this bill to ensure the expeditious and effective enrollment of the anticipated 70,000 newly eligible MaineCare participants, as well as to ensure that the Department can meet the increased claims processing needs. LD 837 establishes new positions to meet these critical functions. Because Maine is experiencing a historically low unemployment rate, it will likely be a lengthy and arduous process to fill these positions. We respectfully request that the Legislature act quickly to begin the hiring process to ensure the needs of our most vulnerable Mainers are met when MaineCare eligibility is expanded.

For the reasons mentioned above, I strongly urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 837 and expand access to medical care for low-income Maine people across the state.

As always, please let me know if you need additional information or if you have any questions.

Thank you,

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