



Testimony before the Health Coverage, Insurance, & Financial Services Committee

LD 1613, An Act To Ensure Access to Women's Health and Economic Security

Darcy Shargo, CEO, Maine Primary Care Association

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Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, & Financial Services Committee, my name is Darcy Shargo, and I am the CEO of the Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA), a membership association that includes all of Maine's 20 Community Health Centers (CHCs). Maine's CHCs provide comprehensive primary and preventive care for approximately 1 in 6 Maine people. Among many other services, reproductive health services are part of a package of critical primary care services that health centers can, and do, offer.

As such, I am here on behalf of Maine's community health center network to express support for LD 1613. Community Health Centers make up the largest primary care network in the state, and they provide high quality, wide-ranging health care services. Often, this care is driven by collaboration and partnerships with other organizations that support access to comprehensive services. Historically, Maine's CHCs have had close partnerships with the Family Planning Association (FPA) of Maine, which has contracted with FQHCs to expand their ability to reach their target population, especially in rural areas. Community Health Centers and the patients they serve have benefited from the additional training and funds made available by partnerships with FPA.

Family planning services have been proven as effective and essential, empowering millions of people to take control of their health and futures. The program supports the provision of birth control, cancer screenings, STD testing and treatment, and other preventive care to more than 23,000 Mainers each year, close to 80 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced-fee services. Therefore, we are very supportive of the bill and its amended language that establishes funding to make sure that the network of clinics that offer these critical services can remain intact. In Maine, four FQHCS have provided family planning for 4,553 unduplicated patients, ensuring access to these critical services for some of our state's most vulnerable populations (data supplied by FPA for FY19); beyond those four CHCs, our entire network has expressed support for FPA and the work they do in various conversations we have had about family planning in our state.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share our support of this bill. If there is any additional information that MPCA or our members could provide with respect to this bill, please don't hesitate to contact me at dshargo@mepca.org.