

State of Maine
130th Legislature

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Testimony of Marge L. Kilkelly, MS CED, on behalf of the Maine Primary Care Association
March 16, 2021

Supporting:

**LD 631, "An Act To Provide Funding for Maine's Health Insurance
Consumer Assistance Program"**

Sponsored by Senator Brenner

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Marge Kilkelly, Policy Program Manager at Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA). MPCA is a membership organization that includes all of Maine's 20 Community Health Centers (CHCs).

Maine's Community Health Centers provide comprehensive medical, behavioral and dental care for approximately 1 in 6 Maine people. CHCs make up the largest primary care network in the state, and provide high quality, wide-ranging health care services. They are at the forefront of delivering care to rural and underserved Maine communities, and serve patients regardless of their health insurance status or ability to pay.

Maine Primary Care Association supports LD 631, "*An Act To Provide Funding for Maine's Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program*" and thanks the sponsor for bringing it forward.

In addition to direct care, part of the health center model is to provide support to individuals in finding health insurance options such as Medicaid or plans offered through the ACA. Although the community health center staff who provide this support are trained and meet as a network to discuss changes to the insurance marketplace, these same staff often rely on additional expertise that is offered through the Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program (HICAP). We have heard from many health center staff about the importance of this resource when it comes to supporting patients and community members through a process that can feel very daunting.

The Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program (HICAP) is a vital tool to ensure that individuals—many of them our neighbors and friends—have access to health care coverage. Everyone wins when our state has the ability to maximize enrollment. MPCA supports the continuation of HICAP, and we believe that this is a necessary program as the health insurance market continues to evolve.

On behalf of the patients, staff and volunteers at Maine's Community Health Centers, we urge passage of LD 631.

Thank you for considering our request, and please do not hesitate to contact me directly at mkilkelly@mepca.org if you have any follow up questions.

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