

State of Maine | 130th Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services
Testimony of Hannah A. Hudson on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
January 11, 2022

Supporting:
LD 1778, “An Act To Improve Health Care Affordability and Increase Options for Comprehensive Coverage for Individuals and Small Businesses in Maine”

Sponsored by Representative Evans

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, I am Hannah Hudson, Policy and Communications 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 CHCs provide comprehensive medical, behavioral, and dental care for approximately 1 in 6 Maine people. Community Health Centers make up the largest independent primary care network in the state, and they 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 1778 and thanks Representative Evans and the other co-sponsors for bringing this legislation forward.

As an association whose mission is to ensure that access to affordable, high quality health care is available for all Maine people, MPCA strongly supported the creation of the Office of Affordable Health Care through legislation in the previous session. It is an important step to ensure that Maine policy makers have access to the best and latest information as they develop future health care policy for Maine.

LD 1778 would expand the scope of the Office of Affordable Health Care's work to focus on affordability barriers directly, requiring the office to study initially the effects of specific policies aimed at improving health care affordability and coverage. It is important that we continue to focus on strategies to improve affordability, as access is critical for patients throughout the state, especially those in rural and underserved areas.

Furthermore, CHCs are also small businesses that are struggling due to COVID-19. Efforts to improve health care affordability and coverage for small businesses can be a critical tool for recruitment and retention, and will be key to building a sustainable workforce moving forward.

On behalf of Maine's Community Health Centers, we urge passage of LD 1778.

Thank you for considering our comment; please do not hesitate to contact me directly at hhudson@mepca.org with any follow up questions.

Hannah A. Hudson, MA
Policy and Communications Manager, MPCA