

State of Maine | 131st Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony of Hannah A. Hudson on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
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Introduction of Maine Primary Care Association

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human 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 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), also known as Community Health Centers (CHCs). Maine's CHCs make up the largest independent primary care network in the state, providing high quality and equitable primary and preventive medical, behavioral, and dental health services for over 200,000 people (1 in 6 Mainers) at more than 70 service delivery sites in all 16 Maine counties.

They are at the forefront of delivering care to rural and underserved Maine communities. Community Health Centers provide all patients with these comprehensive primary care services, as well as a host of other services that include transportation, translation, and case management services. They are further required to provide this care *without regard to a patient's insurance status or ability to pay* - which is a mandate unlike any other primary care provider.

The Community Health Center model provides a paradigm for how Maine should think about primary care delivery moving into a post-pandemic world. Health centers have built their care delivery standards around the notion that a true health home finds a way to address patients as the complex and whole human beings that they are. CHCs promote health equity, while identifying ways to increase efficiency, improve quality of care, and seek innovations in care delivery. CHCs are patient-driven, led by local boards, and staffed by professionals dedicated to providing access to high quality, equitable health care for all Mainers. CHCs are also an important factor in rural economic development; they provide local jobs, spur local spending, and support local health care access and availability - all of which are critical to creating strong communities.

Since its founding in 1981, Maine Primary Care Association has provided training and technical assistance (T/TA), housed relevant programs and services, and advocated tirelessly on behalf of Maine's healthcare safety net and the hundreds of thousands of people it serves each year. MPCA's work is geared toward helping health centers improve programmatic, clinical, and financial performance and operations as well as develop strategies to recruit and retain the health center workforce.

At their core, Primary Care Associations (PCAs) like MPCA create economies of scale for health centers, assessing and monitoring policy and regulatory changes, and assisting health centers in adapting to changing demands from an evolving health care environment. PCAs also

facilitate collaboration between health centers and Medicaid directors, state health departments, and both state and federal lawmakers to inform them of the health center program and its value to patients, and to work with health centers on the best approaches to meet the varying needs of their constituents.

We look forward to working with you this session. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at hudson@mepca.org if I can answer any questions.

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