

State of Maine | 131st Legislature  
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services  
Testimony of Hannah A. Hudson on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association  
March 14, 2023

Neither For Nor Against:  
**LD 876, “An Act to Expand Access to Oral Health Care in Rural Maine by Allowing Certain Out-of-state Dentists to Practice in Dental Clinics in the State”**

Sponsored by Senator Grohoski

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Hannah Hudson, Policy and Communications Manager at the Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA).

MPCA is a membership organization that includes all of Maine's 20 Community Health Centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). 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.

Today, we are testifying “Neither For Nor Against” this bill but wanted to go on the record stating that oral health care access remains a priority for MPCA and our Community Health Center Network in Maine. As an organization, we are focused on supporting CHCs with the expansion of MaineCare’s comprehensive adult dental benefit. This includes dental assistant training, addressing health equity needs, and ensuring that CHC voices are included at relevant state-level meetings.

As more adults have access to the expanded dental benefits, the health centers’ patient population and the complexity of the patient needs have increased. CHCs are doing everything they can to ensure that patients receive the quality treatment they deserve, but waitlists continue to be long across the state.

As we know, Maine is experiencing workforce shortages in many health care professions, and dental providers are no exception. Rural areas, in particular, are experiencing critical challenges with access to care. All efforts that help expand the applicant pool are welcomed to allow for CHCs to be able to hire qualified staff to address the huge need that exists throughout our state.

On behalf of Maine’s Community Health Centers, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [hhudson@mepca.org](mailto:hhudson@mepca.org) with any follow up questions.

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