

State of Maine | 131st Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony of Darcy Shargo on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
May 8, 2023

Supporting:
LD 1792, “Resolve, to Establish the Rural Health Services Task Force”

Sponsored by President Jackson

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Darcy Shargo, Chief Executive Officer at 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).

Maine's Community Health Centers are located in rural or underserved areas. There are more than 70 service delivery sites across all 16 Maine counties and attached to my testimony is a map of all CHC locations throughout the state.

We believe that the CHC model provides a paradigm for how Maine should think about primary care delivery and care coordination moving into a post-pandemic world. Health centers have built their 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. Health centers strive for health equity, while identifying ways to increase efficiency, improving quality of care, and seeking innovations in care delivery. CHCs are patient-driven, led by local boards, and staffed by professionals dedicated to providing access to high quality health care for all Mainers.

MPCA has also been focused on building the future infrastructure for Maine's CHC network and looking at alternative payment models that fully support their unique and critical role in the care delivery system. Value-based programs reward health care providers with incentive payments for the quality of care they give to people with Medicare. It is a potential replacement for traditional fee-for-service reimbursement, which rewards quantity over quality.

The Rural Health Services Task Force would provide a necessary opportunity for various members of Maine's health care system to come together and examine the sustainability of rural health care delivery. As the primary care safety net for our state, we thank President Jackson and the other co-sponsors for bringing this legislation forward and appreciate the opportunity to be included in this discussion. We also respectfully ask that you pass this bill.

On behalf of Maine's Community Health Centers, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at dshargo@mepca.org with any follow up questions.

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Chief Executive Officer
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