



**Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee  
on Health and Human Services**

**LD 392, An Act To Fund Maine’s School-based Health Centers  
LD 836, An Act To Expand Maine’s School-based Health Centers**

Bryan Wyatt, Director of Policy and Communications, Maine Primary Care Association  
February 25, 2019

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Bryan Wyatt and I am the Director of Policy and Communications at the Maine Primary Care Association.

Today, I am submitting written testimony on behalf of the Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA) and our members, which include all of Maine’s 19 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and one FQHC Look-Alike, **in support** of two bills: **LD 392, An Act To Fund Maine’s School-based Health Centers** and **LD 836, An Act To Expand Maine’s School-based Health Centers**. Three of Maine’s FQHCs, also known as Community Health Centers,—Community Clinical Services, Greater Portland Health and Penobscot Community Health Care (PCHC)—operate a large majority of the state’s school-based health center (SBHC) sites. In addition to MPCA’s support of these bills, you will also hear testimony in support of these bills from member health centers who run a number of SBHCs in the communities they serve.

The timing of these bills could not be more opportune. February is National School-based Health Care Awareness Month. In Maine, and across the country, school-based health centers are playing a critical role in promoting health and educational equity for all children. At a time when far too many of our children struggle in schools because they lack access to basic health care services, SBHCs are there to help. When integrated services such as medical, behavioral, dental and vision are placed in Maine’s schools alongside comprehensive prevention programs that help to address tobacco and other substance use, it is much more likely that young people will have equal opportunities to learn and grow.

LD 392 and LD 836 would fund and effectively expand access to a full range of health and primary care services to children who need it most or are otherwise impacted by transportation constraints, food insecurity and other social determinants of health. Investing in programs that reduce barriers to obtaining preventive and primary health care services have proven to yield improvements in health and educational well-being by bringing together parents, educators, health care providers and students to address a variety of important health-related issues.

According to a recent study in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*<sup>1</sup>, “From the societal perspective, total annual benefit per SBHC ranged from \$15,028 to \$912,878. From healthcare payers’ perspective, particularly Medicaid, SBHCs led to net savings ranging from \$30 to \$969 per visit. From patients’ perspective, savings were also positive.”

We applaud Rep. Handy, the sponsor of these bills, on his tireless advocacy on behalf of school-based health centers and proven programs designed to eliminate disparities in health outcomes in our children and adolescents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of these two important bills. If there is any additional information the Maine Primary Care Association and/or our member health centers can offer with respect to the review and backing of these bills, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at [bwyatt@mepca.org](mailto:bwyatt@mepca.org).

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(16\)00043-X/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(16)00043-X/fulltext)