



Testimony before the Health and Human Services Committee on LD 1317, *An Act To Restore Services To Help Certain Noncitizens Meet Their Basic Needs*

Darcy Shargo, CEO, Maine Primary Care Association
April 12, 2019

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee—I am Darcy Shargo, and I serve as CEO of the Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA). I am sorry that I cannot be here in person to share this testimony.

I am submitting this testimony today in support of, LD 1317, *An Act To Restore Services To Help Certain Noncitizens Meet Their Basic Needs*. On behalf of MPCA, and its members, which include all of Maine's 19 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and one FQHC Look-Alike, I encourage you to vote in favor of this bill. Maine's FQHCs, also known as Community Health Centers, provide comprehensive primary and preventive care for approximately 1 in 6 Maine people.

As the largest primary care network in the state, FQHCs exist in communities of need across this state, and they have long provided critical access points to Maine people. Central to the CHC's care delivery model is to provide support for patients in addressing needs that fall outside of traditional medical or behavioral health needs. In fact, Maine's health centers have been part of a national effort to implement a social determinants of health screening tool into their Electronic Health Records (EHRs). In screening efforts, the CHCs often see that food insecurity is a challenge, as are a range of other issues that may be further exacerbated by a person's refugee or asylum seeker status. Often, these needs are referred to as the social determinants of health. As you are well aware, there is a large and growing body of evidence that underscores how important it is to address the social determinants of health, as these aspects of a person's life are those that have the most impact on whether a person can get, and stay, healthy.

With this as a background, Maine's FQHCs support this bill, as it provides additional access to what many of us recognize as basic needs. MPCA supports efforts to increase the availability of resources that help people achieve and maintain health.

Thank you for considering our request, and please do not hesitate to contact me at dshargo@mepca.org if you have any follow up questions.