

STATE OF MAINE

—  
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

—  
H.P. 623 - L.D. 976

**Resolve, to Establish the Task Force on Accessibility to Appropriate Communication Methods for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Patients**

**Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved:** That the Task Force on Accessibility to Appropriate Communication Methods for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Patients, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is established.

**Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the task force consists of 7 members appointed as follows:

1. One member of the Senate who serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, appointed by the President of the Senate;
2. One member of the House of Representatives who serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
3. One member representing the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Aging and Disability Services, appointed by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services;
4. One member representing Disability Rights Maine, appointed by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services;
5. One member representing the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf, appointed by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services;
6. One member representing the Department of Labor who works with compliance issues regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, appointed by the Commissioner of Labor; and
7. One member of the public who is a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

**Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the Senate member is the Senate chair and the House of Representatives member is the House chair of the task force.

**Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of task force. Resolved:** That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this

resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the task force. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the task force to meet and conduct its business.

**Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the task force shall study accessibility to appropriate communication methods for deaf and hard-of-hearing patients in health care settings and how that accessibility may be improved. The task force shall consider, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The availability of American Sign Language interpreters in health care settings;
2. The availability of other communication technologies in health care settings, such as video interpreters, automatically generated voice transcriptions and automatically generated captions;
3. Staff education and training programs on overcoming barriers to health care experienced by deaf and hard-of-hearing patients; and
4. Successful models for overcoming barriers to health care experienced by deaf and hard-of-hearing patients.

**Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the task force, except that Legislative Council staff support is not authorized when the Legislature is in regular or special session.

**Sec. 7. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than December 6, 2023, the task force shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. The Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services is authorized to report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.