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Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 718 An Act To Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in the MaineCare Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program

April 15, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, ladies and gentlemen of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of Maine Community Action Partnership, and we support LD 718 An Act To Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in the MaineCare Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

For more than 50 years, Community Action has served as a dynamic and community-based force in addressing the causes and conditions of poverty throughout Maine and the country. Our ten Community Action Agencies (CAAs) deliver programs and services for people with low- and moderate income, including the Home Energy Assistance Program, or HEAP; workforce development; the current rental relief program; Head Start and more. Larger CAAs can provide up to 200 separate programs, smaller generally are able to provide up to 25 or 30. One also includes a Federally Qualified Health Center.

Equity – in health, education and economic opportunity - is a keystone of our Mission and work. We are focused on ending the systems and policies that allow or even encourage racist outcomes.

I am sorry to say, this bill is necessary because until 2011 the State of Maine did offer MaineCare to all income eligible Mainers, regardless of immigrant status. It was changed largely due to wrong-headed beliefs about who immigrants are and what they do, and do not, bring to Maine. I personally had several uncomfortable conversations with the previous administration about HIV and AIDS, the previous, less deadly avian flu pandemic and other health issues attributed to immigrants. The current pandemic and its racist origin theories show this misunderstanding about disease and illness continues. The actual numbers of those who became infected with and ill from COVID-19 – the most population disparate number in the country - show that we need everyone to have access to healthcare.

Access to healthcare is one of several building blocks to success – all who live in Maine, regardless of their immigration status or even time in the state, need and deserve access to housing, education and economic opportunity and to meet those things, they need health and healthcare.

Healthcare is a necessity, not a luxury. I ask for your support of LD 718.

I am happy to answer any questions that I can, now or in the work session.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Megan Hannan](#)