



**State of Maine | 132<sup>nd</sup> Legislature**  
**Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services**  
**Testimony of Carter Friend on behalf of York County Community Action**  
**January 23, 2025**

**In Opposition To:**

LD 209: An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, and Representative Meyer, and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Carter Friend, the CEO of York County Community Action and Nasson Health Care, one of Maine's 20 community health centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and part of the largest independent primary care network in the state.

York County Community Action is unique in that we are both a Community Action Agency and a Community Health Center. As a Community Action Agency, we promote economic and social well-being for individuals and families. As a Community Health Center (through Nasson Health Care), we offer integrated, comprehensive health care, including primary medical care, behavioral health care and dental care. We provide health care services to over 9,000 patients per year to members of our community regardless of their health insurance status or ability to pay.

We strongly oppose the decision to remove one-time funding approved in Public Law 2023, chapter 643 for developing and expanding pharmacy services and access to affordable priced prescription drugs for patients of FQHCs. Mainers are facing a critical shortage of access to affordable medications, especially in rural and underserved areas served by FQHCs. FQHCs want to be able to provide pharmacy services to the communities that they serve, yet existing health center revenues and resources are insufficient to support such development or expansion of current services. This funding established a grant program to provide support for FQHCs to develop or expand their capacity to provide greater access to affordably priced drugs for their patients.

At Nasson, prescription medication plays a central role in the treatment of many of our patients. For example, as a Health Care for the Homeless provider we work to ensure low-barrier access to health care to homeless individuals and families. In 2023, we served over 1,400 homeless patients, a number that has increased steadily over the last few years. People who are homeless more frequently experience conditions such as HIV, lung disease (e.g., bronchitis and pneumonia), malnutrition, diabetes, hypertension, and exposure to the cold. They also often experience mental illness and substance use disorder, and they frequently need dental care. Many of these conditions require prescription medications. This grant program will help us serve these and other vulnerable patients in as low-barrier manner as possible, removing geographic and other barriers to access to prescription medication.



On behalf of York County Community Action, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [carter.friend@yccac.org](mailto:carter.friend@yccac.org) with any follow up questions.

Carter Friend  
CEO  
York County Community Action