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Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 619 An Act to Ensure Coordination of Care for MaineCare Members

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, members of the Committee On Health and Human Services, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of the Maine Community Action Partnership, the membership association of the ten community action agencies in Maine and we support LD 619 An Act to Ensure Coordination of Care for MaineCare Members.

We use a Whole Family, or Two Generation Approach to serving families with children. Beginning with Head Start students and their caretaker adults, adding families who come to us for heating assistance, weatherization or other of our myriad services, we aim to help families out of poverty by both providing services and programs they need at the time while engaging in education and workforce development.

Studies have proven that to improve the lives of low-income families in the present and future, we need to address the needs of the entire family – so we help the parents or caregivers with their educational and/or employment needs, while also ensuring the children have high quality early care and education. We know it works both ways: when adults thrive, their children thrive; as children do better, their caregivers do better.

In other states, community action agencies also serve to coordinate care for these families and individuals, therefore assuring physical, mental and social needs are attended to. For many years, Head Start staff performed early and periodic screening, diagnosis and testing as targeted case managers; this ended a few years ago. Head Start staff still perform the EPSDT for all students, but are not reimbursed any more. Case managers working with our families could do the same, we know the model works with Medicaid Managed Care and should work just as well with MaineCare and Primary Care Plus.

We also know that having regular contact with individuals and families can lead to better health and well-being outcomes; our case managers also attend to the social determinants of health: ensuring our customers have a safe and affordable place to live; adequate food for the family; attend work and school regularly; and more.

The model I propose goes further than the bill you have before you, but it is well worth consideration. By using a value based, widely appreciated system of care, we can improve lives and save money.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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