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Testimony in favor of LD 587: Resolve, to Automatically Increase a Residential Care or Nursing Facility Resident's Personal Needs Allowance Under the MaineCare Program When the Consumer Price Index Increases

Greetings Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee Health and Human Services. I am Bridget Quinn, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our more than 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony. Today I am testifying in favor of LD 587: Resolve, to Automatically Increase a Residential Care or Nursing Facility Resident's Personal Needs Allowance Under the MaineCare Program When the Consumer Price Index Increases.

As you are aware, Medicaid is the largest public financing program providing health and long-term care coverage for people with low-incomes in the United States. The program helps finance care for more than two-thirds of all nursing home residents. AARP believes long term services and supports should emphasize the independence, dignity, autonomy, and privacy of individual consumers so they can maximize their physical and psychosocial potential, and the personal needs allowance helps to do so.

While Medicaid residents in long-term care often have outside income, such as Social Security or a small savings, Medicaid takes most of that money to defray care costs, leaving residents with little to spend on personal items, such as toothpaste, deodorant, snacks they enjoy and gifts for family members. The personal needs allowance allows residents to recoup some of those costs, \$40 for those in Nursing Facilities and \$70 for adults living in residential care facilities for example assisted living other than nursing facilities. Especially at a time when the cost of everyday needs are rising it is time to increase the personal needs allowance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If you have questions for me, I can be reached at bquinn@aarp.org or at 207-272-8563.

Bridget Quinn
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