



**Testimony of Hilary Schneider, Regional Government Relations Director,
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**

**In Support of LD 199 “An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the
MaineCare Program”**

March 28, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Hilary Schneider, and I am the Regional Government Relations Director of the North Atlantic Region for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). In this role, I serve as the lead Government Relations Director for Maine. ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. As the nation’s leading advocate for public policies that are helping to defeat cancer, ACS CAN ensures that cancer patients, survivors, and their families have a voice in public policy matters at all levels of government.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to submit the following testimony in support of LD 199. The American Cancer Society and ACS CAN believe that everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. Cancer impacts everyone and critical to eliminating disparities and ensuring health equity is to guarantee that all individuals have access to affordable health coverage.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) expanded health insurance coverage to millions of Americans. However, despite these coverage gains, twelve years after the law was enacted approximately 27 million people in the United States,ⁱ including more than 72,000 people in Maine,ⁱⁱ remain uninsured. Data shows that noncitizens are more likely to be uninsured. In 2021, 25% of lawfully present individuals and 46% of undocumented immigrants were uninsured, compared to only 8 percent of U.S. citizens.ⁱⁱⁱ

Having adequate and affordable health insurance coverage is a key determinant for surviving cancer. Research from the American Cancer Society shows that uninsured people are less likely to get screened for cancer and thus are more likely to have their cancer diagnosed at an advanced stage when survival is less likely and the cost of care more expensive.^{iv} Access to care for those who are undocumented not only ensures that serious diseases like cancer can be detected and treated earlier but also often means better patient outcomes and less costs to the individual and the system.

As state and federal policymakers consider legislation to expand health care access to all individuals, ACS CAN evaluates these policy proposals based on the following criteria:

- Whether the proposal will result in access to meaningful health insurance available to all regardless of citizenship status;
- Whether the coverage is adequate and provides those services cancer patients need most including evidence-based cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and follow-up;

- Whether the coverage is affordable; and
- Whether the coverage reduces administrative burdens and barriers.

ACS CAN advocates for access to affordable, comprehensive coverage to better prevent, treat and survive cancer regardless of citizenship status, thereby ending cancer as we know it for everyone. LD 199 builds on the steps taken by the Maine Legislature in 2021 that expanded access to MaineCare and CHIP coverage for people under age 21 and pregnant people, regardless of immigration status by allowing the remaining Maine adults who are currently excluded from MaineCare coverage due to immigration status to have access to health coverage.

For the above reasons, we urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 199. We appreciate your time and consideration of our comments. I would be happy to answer any questions about this testimony.

ⁱ United States Census Bureau. Health insurance coverage in the United States: 2021. Sept. 13, 2022. Available at <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/demo/p60-278.html>

ⁱⁱ Kaiser Family Foundation. State Health Facts. Health Insurance Coverage of the Total Population: Maine, accessed on March 22, 2023, Available at <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population/?dataView=1¤tTimeframe=0&selectedRows=%7B%22states%22:%7B%22maine%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

ⁱⁱⁱ Kaiser Family Foundation. Health Coverage and Care of Immigrants. Dec 20, 2022, Available at <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-and-care-of-immigrants/>

^{iv} E Ward et al, “Association of Insurance with Cancer Care Utilization and Outcomes,” *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians* 58:1 (Jan./Feb. 2008), <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/news/report-links-health-insurance-status-withcancer-care>.