



March 28, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Melissa Martin, and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), the organization which represents and serves Maine's sexual violence prevention and response programs as well as Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers. MECASA initiates and advocates for victim-centered public policy; provides expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners; and funds the service providers in your communities.

I am submitting testimony **in support of LD 199, "An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program". Thank you for Speaker Talbot Ross; Senator Carney; Representatives Dhalac, Gattine, Meyer, Rana, and Zager; and Senators Ingwersen and Rotundo for sponsoring this bill.**

I am here to share just one of the many important perspectives as to why accessing Mainecare is important regardless of immigration status.

Approximately 14,000 Mainers each year experience sexual violence. However, certain populations are at even greater risk of experiencing sexual violence such as those with developmental disabilities, Trans Mainers, and, important to this bill, those without immigration status.

In addition to being more vulnerable to sexual violence, those without immigration status are even less likely to report to law enforcement, and sexual violence is already reported to law enforcement at low rates by all of those who experience it. This means access to medical care is extremely important for safety and well-being, and may be the only path those without immigration status who experience sexual violence have to connect with other support services, such as our sexual assault support centers.

Each year, the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault conducts a Needs Assessment to assess the priority areas for survivors of sexual violence. This year, the overwhelming central need for sexual violence survivors in Maine was basic needs. This bill would help provide the incredibly important need of medical care to all sexual assault survivors living in Maine. In addition, preventing survivors from incurring medical debt when they are uninsured can have the additional benefit of protecting their access to other basic needs such as housing.

We urge you to support LD 199 and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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### About Maine's Sexual Assault Service Providers

One in five Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Each year, 14,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>

Maine's [sexual violence service providers](#) provide free and confidential services across the state to victims/survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault and those close to them, as well as to individuals who wish to increase their understanding of the issues. Just some of the services include a 24-hour statewide sexual assault helpline, crisis intervention and information, support groups, in-person accompaniment and advocacy through the medical and legal systems, and school- and community-based prevention education. Services are provided for a victim/survivor regardless of when they experienced sexual violence, and regardless of what type of sexual violence they experienced. Types of sexual violence include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment and gender-based bullying, child sexual abuse, elder sexual abuse, stalking, sex trafficking, and sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship.

*24/7 Confidential*  
*Maine Sexual Assault Helpline: [1-800-871-7741](tel:1-800-871-7741)*

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<sup>1</sup> Dumont, R. & Shaler, G. (2015). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.

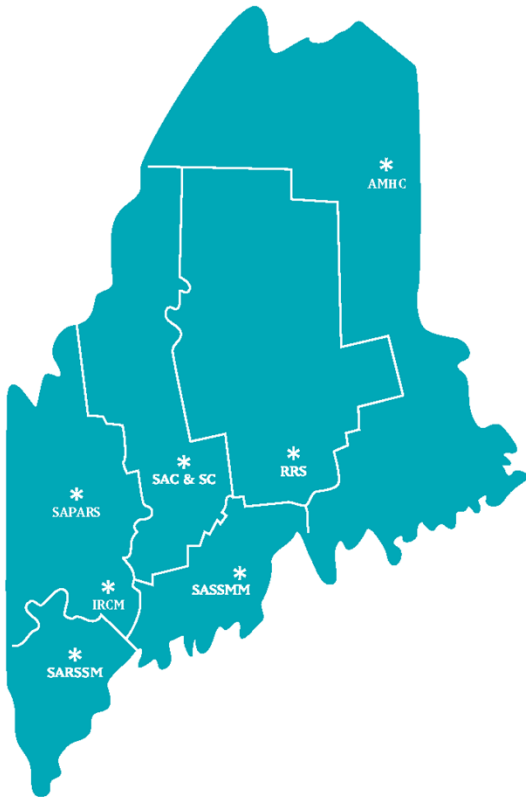
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



# mecasa

MAINE COALITION AGAINST  
SEXUAL ASSAULT

info@mecasa.org | mecasa.org  
207-626-0034



STATEWIDE  
SEXUAL ASSAULT HELPLINE  
1-800-871-7741

Free. Private. 24/7.

## MAINE'S SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTERS

### AMHC Sexual Assault Services (AMHC)

Serving Aroostook, Hancock, & Washington Counties •  
amhcsexualassaultservices.org

### Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Serving Androscoggin & Cumberland Counties • ircofmaine.org

### Rape Response Services (RRS)

Serving Penobscot & Piscataquis Counties • rrsonline.org

### Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Services (SAPARS)

Serving Androscoggin, Oxford & Franklin Counties and the towns of  
Bridgton & Harrison • sapars.org

### Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center (SAC & SC)

Serving Kennebec & Somerset Counties • silentnomore.org

### Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)

Serving Cumberland & York Counties • sarsonline.org

### Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (SASSMM)

Serving Eastern Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Knox, Waldo & Lincoln  
Counties • sassmm.org

## MORE SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

Maine TransNet • mainetrans.net • info@mainetransnet.org

Wabanaki Women's Coalition • wabanakiwomenscoalition.org  
207-763-3478

Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-551-3639

Houlton Band of Maliseets, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-532-6401

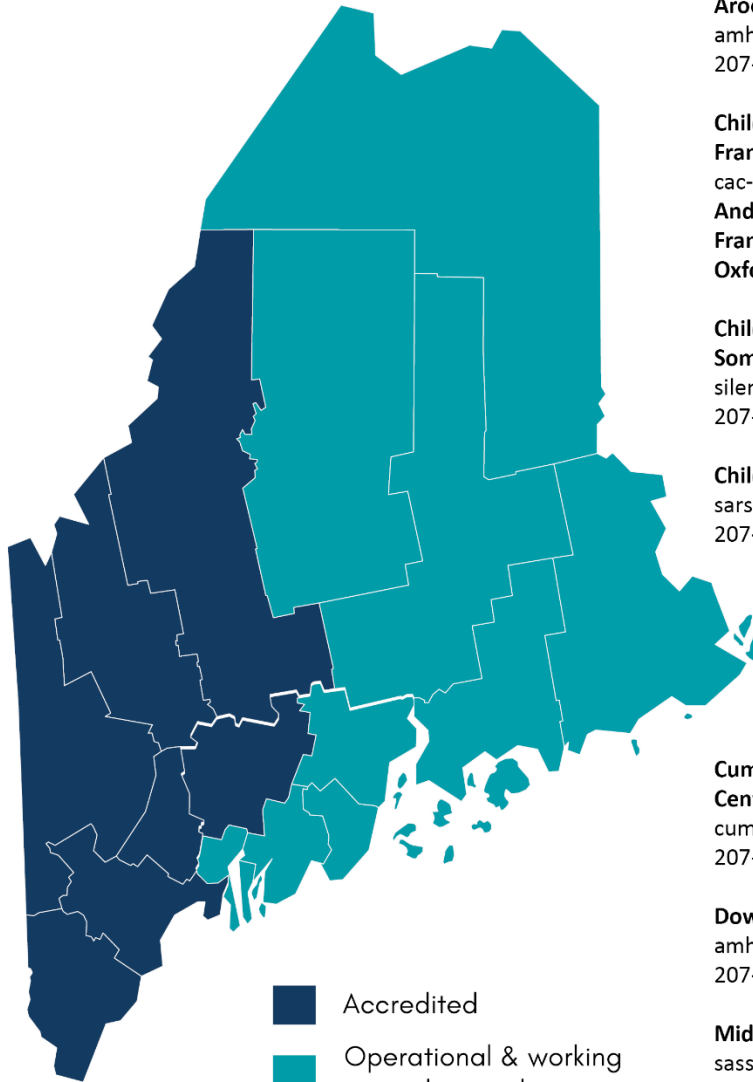
Indian Township Passamaquoddy, Domestic & Sexual  
Violence Advocacy Center • 207-214-1917

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations • 1-877-853-2613

Penobscot Indian Nation, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-631-4886



## Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers



■ Accredited  
■ Operational & working  
toward accreditation

**Aroostook County Children's Advocacy Center**  
amhcsas.org  
207-472-6134

**Children's Advocacy Center of Androscoggin,  
Franklin, and Oxford Counties**  
cac-afco.org  
**Androscoggin:** 207-784-0436  
**Franklin:** 207-778-9777  
**Oxford:** 207-739-1228

**Children's Advocacy Center of Kennebec &  
Somerset Counties**  
silentnomore.org/about-our-cac  
207-861-4491

**Children's Advocacy Center of York County**  
sarsmm.org  
207-459-2380

**Cumberland County Children's Advocacy  
Center**  
cumberlandcountycac.org  
207-879-6160

**Downeast Children's Advocacy Center**  
amhcsas.org  
207-255-3687

**Midcoast Children's Advocacy Center**  
sassmm.org  
207-522-7162

**Penquis Children's Advocacy Center**  
penquiscac.org  
207-974-2469