



HEALTHCARE  
PURCHASER  
ALLIANCE  
OF MAINE

April 3, 2023

Senator Donna Bailey, Co-Chair  
Representative Anne Perry, Co-Chair  
Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services  
C/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

I am writing to express the Healthcare Purchaser Alliance (HPA) of Maine's support for ***LD 1077, An Act to Fund Consultation Services to Ensure Affordable Health Care for Maine Residents.***

The HPA is a nonprofit that represents the purchasers of healthcare in Maine. Our mission is to advance healthcare value and to support and incentivize high-quality, affordable care. We have over 60 members, including some of the largest public and private employers and health trusts in Maine. Collectively, our members spend over a billion dollars annually providing health care for nearly one quarter of the commercially insured population in the state.

The funds appropriated under this bill would continue ongoing support of Maine's health insurance Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), and its work to help Maine residents access high-quality and affordable health care.

Today, medical bills are one of the major causes of personal bankruptcy in the US,<sup>1</sup> with a 2015 Kaiser Family Foundation study finding that 26 percent of Americans age 18–64 struggled to pay medical bills, including 19 percent with employer-sponsored health insurance.<sup>2</sup> Not only is health care increasingly unaffordable, the system is incredibly complex, with many people unsure of basic health insurance terms and how to use insurance to access needed care. Indeed, a 2019 study found that over half of U.S. adults have inadequate health insurance literacy, which is the “ability to seek, obtain, and understand health insurance plans, and once enrolled use their insurance to seek appropriate health care services.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Safehaven, “Medical Bankruptcy is Killing the American Middle Class,” NASDAQ, February 2019. Available at: <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/medical-bankruptcy-is-killing-the-american-middle-class-2019-02-14>.

<sup>2</sup> Liz Hamel, Mira Norton, Karen Pollitz, Larry Levitt, Gary Claxton, and Mollyann Brodie, “The Burden of Medical Debt: Results from the Kaiser Family Foundation/New York Times Medical Bills Survey, Kaiser Family Foundation, January 2016. Available at: <https://www.kff.org/report-section/the-burden-of-medical-debt-section-1-who-has-medical-bill-problems-and-what-are-the-contributing-factors/>.

<sup>3</sup> Jean Edward, Amanda Wiggins, Malea Hoepf Young, and Mary Kay Rayens, “Significant Disparities Exist in Consumer Health Literacy: Implications for Health Care Reform,” National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine: National Center for Biotechnology Information, October 2019. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6831506/>.



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With consumers struggling to both understand their insurance options and to pay for care, the services the CAP provides have never been more important to ensure that Mainers are aware of all the resources that may be available to them to help defray and lower their healthcare costs. These include assistance with determining eligibility and applying for coverage programs, such as subsidized care on the Maine Marketplace, or hospital free care, as well as understanding and leveraging coverage and appeals rights under their current insurance plans.

The CAP is an incredible resource for Mainers, with a dedicated and caring staff whose expertise provides vital assistance to Mainers struggling to access and afford care. We are extremely fortunate to have this tremendous resource available in our state, and I urge you to continue to support the essential work that the CAP provides to Mainers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for LD 1077 and for the important work that the CAP undertakes to help Mainers navigate the complexities of our healthcare system and access affordable care. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance. I can be reached at [phayes@purchaseralliance.org](mailto:phayes@purchaseralliance.org) or 844-8106.

Best,

Peter Hayes  
President and CEO