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Maine Family Planning
Testimony in Support
LD 1040, An Act to Require Reimbursement for Gender-Affirming Care for MaineCare Members
April 12, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, Maine Family Planning is testifying today in support of LD 1040, An Act to Require Reimbursement for Gender-Affirming Care for MaineCare Members.

Maine Family Planning has been Maine's family planning network hub for more than 50 years, since our founding in 1971 as the Family Planning Association of Maine. Today, Maine's family planning network includes our 18 independent clinics, most in rural communities, and 61 subgrantee sites providing family planning services. In 2014, we launched the Open Door Transgender Health program from our Lewiston clinic with 18 patients. Today, Open Door sees more than 650 unique patients annually across 8 clinic sites and via telehealth, with word of mouth a major driver of new patient traffic. The need for this care exists in our communities and family planning providers are stepping up to meet that need.

Patient-Centered Care for Transgender People: Recommended Practices for Health Care Settings from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that, "Many transgender people experience stigma and discrimination in their day-to-day lives that can affect access to health care. In particular, many transgender women of color (specifically those who are black or African American and Hispanic or Latino) have reported being victims of harassment and violence, even in health care settings. Given these challenges, transgender people, especially transgender women of color, may delay seeking medical care because of fear or actual experience of negative treatment by health care staff."¹

Trans people face stigma and discrimination that impacts their social determinants of health across a broad range of factors, resulting in higher risk factors for a variety of health conditions. Affordable, accessible health care, such as MaineCare, is essential for achieving health equity for trans Mainers and others in the LGBTQ+ community.

This year a record number of anti-LGBTQ bills have been introduced across the country, more than double that of last year, which held the previous record. Families and individuals are afraid they won't be able to get the care that they need. With LD 1040, we have an opportunity to once again demonstrate our state's firm commitment to inclusive, evidence-based approaches to community health. We urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1040.

Thank you,

George Hill
President & CEO
Maine Family Planning

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/clinicians/transforming-health/health-care-providers/affirmative-care.html/>