

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Office for Family Independence  
11 State House Station  
109 Capitol Street  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
Tel.: (207) 624-4168; Toll-Free: (800) 442-6003  
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay); Fax: (207) 287-3455

April 12, 2023

Senator Joseph Baldacci, Chair  
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1204 – *An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in the MaineCare Program for Incarcerated Persons*

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

This letter is to provide you with information that might be helpful to you in your deliberations regarding LD 1204. The proposed legislation requires the Department of Health and Human Services to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with counties in Maine that have a county or regional jail in order to provide incarcerated persons assistance with applying for MaineCare.

The Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Family Independence (OFI) has a current memorandum of understanding with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to assist individuals residing in state prisons with applying for MaineCare. Under this memorandum of understanding the DOC connects incarcerated individuals who are scheduled for release with necessary resources to apply for MaineCare. In addition, they provide OFI with a monthly report of current MaineCare members who are scheduled for release so that full MaineCare coverage, which had previously been adjusted to a limited MaineCare benefit due to incarceration, can be reinstated at release.

The Department has previously attempted to engage with regional and county jails to establish similar processes. The reason for why these attempts did not result in similar agreements with the jails is not clear to the Department.

The Department recognizes that unlike residents of state prisons, individuals residing in local jails are generally incarcerated for shorter timeframes, which could result in a greater volume of individuals needing assistance applying for MaineCare on a weekly or monthly basis and may require different roles and responsibilities of both OFI and the jails if a memorandum of understanding was crafted. The Department is willing to work with county and regional jails to ensure eligible individuals have access to healthcare coverage.

We wanted you to be aware of the above information as you consider this bill going forward. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Anthony Pelotte", is located below the word "Sincerely,".

Anthony Pelotte, Director  
Office for Family Independence