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April 7, 2023

Senator Joseph Baldacci, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Testimony in support for LD 1040
An Act to Require Reimbursement for Gender-affirming Care for MaineCare Members

I am writing to you on behalf of the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association Legislative Committee to urge you to support LD 1040. I live in Hampden and work for Northern Light Health Primary in Hampden as a Nurse Practitioner.

More than a dozen studies of over 30,000 transgender and gender-diverse young people consistently show that access to gender-affirming care is associated with better mental health outcomes, and that lack of access to such care is associated with higher rates of suicidality, depression, and self-harming behavior.

Major medical organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the Endocrine Society, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Psychiatric Association, have published policy statements and guidelines on how to provide age-appropriate gender-affirming care. All of the above-listed medical societies find such care evidence-based and medically necessary.

The gender-affirming model of care affirms diversity in gender identity and assists individuals in defining, exploring, and actualizing their gender identity, allowing for exploration without judgments or assumptions. Gender-affirming care is highly individualized and focuses on the needs of each individual by including psychoeducation about gender and sexuality (appropriate to age and developmental level), parental and family support, social interventions, and gender-affirming medical interventions.

We encourage the legislators to continue to pass bills based on science, data, and improved outcomes for the people of Maine instead of culture bias or political pressure. Voting 'ought to pass' for this bill would insure that the MaineCare program does not discriminate and also provides reimbursement and coverage for basic medical needs of our transgender community. It is essential to supporting an at-risk community and will send a message that we in Maine support all people without discrimination.

Respectfully submitted,

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Maine Nurse Practitioner Association
LD 1040

thank-you for considering this issue and reading this testimony