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***Testimony of Senator Anne Carney in support of***  
**LD 199, An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing**  
**Exclusions to the MaineCare Program**  
***Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services***  
**March 28, 2023**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Anne Carney, proudly representing Senate District 29, which includes South Portland, Cape Elizabeth and part of Scarborough. Today I am pleased to speak in support of LD 199, An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program. This legislation will remove barriers to public insurance coverage and help Maine immigrants get necessary preventative health care and seek treatment when they are sick.

I am usually before this committee to advocate for maternal and child health legislation. And while there are many reasons why we should include all income-eligible Mainers in MaineCare, I want to focus specifically on Maine families. When you consider the impact on Maine families that have one or more immigrant parents, it is easy to appreciate the importance of LD 199 and providing MaineCare to immigrants who are income eligible.

First, look at what immigrants pay in state and federal taxes. Mainers who are immigrants contribute hundreds of millions of dollars each year to state and federal revenue. A report from the [American Immigration Council](#) shows that in 2018, Maine families headed by an immigrant parent paid \$437.7 million in federal taxes and \$193.9 million in state and local taxes. I encourage you to listen to the Mainers providing testimony today regarding their work and their contribution of taxes.

Second, look at what families gain by having MaineCare coverage. When parents have health insurance, their children are more likely to be insured and to receive

medical care. Research, like this report from the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), conclusively shows that children in a household who are eligible for Medicaid are more likely to be insured when their parents gain coverage. In contrast, “among citizen children, those with at least one noncitizen parent were significantly more likely to be uninsured than those with citizen parents.” Kaiser Family Foundation, [Health Coverage and Care of Immigrants](#), Dec. 20, 2022.

Equally important, research shows that expansion of Medicaid for adults with low-income increases by 29% the likelihood that their children will receive important annual well-child care: “Medicaid expansions targeted at low-income adults are associated with increased receipt of recommended pediatric preventive care for their children. This finding reveals an important spillover effect of parental insurance coverage that should be considered in future policy decisions surrounding adult Medicaid eligibility.” See abstract, [Spillover Effects of Adult Medicaid Expansions on Children’s Use of Preventive Services](#), Pediatrics, December 2017.

Third, consider the importance of parents having access to primary care. Currently parents who are ineligible for MaineCare because of their immigration status are less likely to have a primary care provider or to have visited a doctor in the past 12 months, and more likely to have gone without needed medical care in the past 12 months due to cost. [KFF](#). Moms cannot get mammograms or pap smears. Dads cannot get treatment for high blood pressure. These are common preventative treatments that anyone with a primary care provider receives to maintain good health, to prevent serious disease, and to make sure parents are able to support their children now and in the future.

This lack of access to care exists despite the fact that, nationally, these parents are “contributing billions of dollars in insurance premiums and taxes, [and] they help subsidize the U.S. health care system and offset the costs of care incurred by U.S.-born citizens.” [Id.](#)

Thank you for your consideration today. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.



Anne Carney

State Senator, Senate District 29

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