

Tuesday April 18th, 2023

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: Testimony on LD592

“An act to amend the law governing MaineCare coverage of Chiropractic treatment”

Dear members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

Thank you for allowing me to submit my written testimony favoring LD592.

I have been a Chiropractic provider in Lewiston, Maine, since 1991. Upon opening my practice, my duty as a Healthcare provider was to accept any patients regardless of their insurance coverage. Consequently, I enrolled as a MaineCare provider, formerly known as Medicaid, in those years. Back then, reimbursement was close to \$10 for a visit. In 2023, 32 years later, I am still a MaineCare provider with a reimbursement of \$18.75 for a visit.

Seeing MaineCare patients is not a lucrative decision. However, it is a way to give back to society and the people of Maine. In this Democratic society, we must join forces to help others. We have to do our share, and for me, it is a way to accomplish it.

The current state of Chiropractic coverage in the MaineCare system needs to be improved. Currently, MaineCare only allows examination, radiograph, and spinal manipulation as covered services. Other services, such as therapy, are not covered.

Allowing us to practice according to our full scope would allow MaineCare patients to be treated accordingly in more comprehensive fashions with an anticipated better outcome.

Currently, there is a significant shortage of providers accepting MaineCare patients. Many providers are enrolled as participating providers but, unfortunately, are not taking new patients for various reasons. It is true of Chiropractic providers and Physical therapists within the Lewiston/Auburn area. This problem reflects not only local but a statewide problem.

There is a waiting time of many months for a new patient with MaineCare insurance because, as a provider here in Lewiston/Auburn, I am the only one actively accepting their insurance. Therefore, I receive many calls weekly from local physicians from both hospitals St-Mary's and CMMC, for any openings for their patients. Frankly, it is a frustrating situation for both of us.

I suspect that expanding Chiropractic coverage will remove some barriers that prevent Chiropractic providers from accepting MaineCare patients because they will have the tools necessary to treat the patient according to their scope of practice.

Chiropractic providers are not asking for an expansion of their scope. They are solely asking to be allowed to practice as other providers already do, which is allowing them to practice according to their training.

Last, there will be cost savings in the long run. Many medical providers currently send their MaineCare patients to the emergency room or urgent care because of their inability to make a timely referral to a Chiropractic provider. It adds to unnecessary costs and causes suffering to patients.

Allowing full scope for Chiropractic providers in the MaineCare system is not only a wise choice from an objective standpoint but a sound decision that has been long overdue.

Again, I thank the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services for the opportunity to submit my written testimony and thoroughly consider all pertinent facts before making an informed decision. I remain available to answer any questions.

Best regards,

Luc J Dionne DC