



LD 953 An Act to Protect Maine Patients Regarding Hospital Price Transparency

Testimony in Opposition April 24, 2023

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN. I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations speaking in opposition to this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with more than 10,000 employees statewide.

The federal hospital price transparency regulation became effective January 1, 2021, and requires each hospital operating in the United States to make public its standard charges for the items and services it provides. Hospitals are required to make their standard charges public in two ways: 1) a consumer-friendly display comprising at least 300 shoppable services, which can be satisfied through the release of a shoppable services file or by offering a price estimator tool, and 2) a comprehensive, machine-readable file.

Northern Light Health is in compliance with the regulation with a web page designed to provide the public with access to price transparency information, online price estimates, access to a financial counselor for assistance with price estimates and links to machine readable files for each member hospital. The price estimator tool helps individuals plan for the costs of health care services including treatments, tests and procedures. If the price estimator does not provide pricing information for the service the individual is looking, the financial counselors are available to help them. The site also includes a link to Compare Maine to access price transparency tools from the Maine Health Data Organization.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has the authority to assess penalties against hospitals for non-compliance, the penalties range from \$300 to \$5500 per day depending on the size of the hospital.

Given that the federal government requires hospitals to comply with the price transparency rule and has authority to assess penalties the bill before you today is not needed. We ask that you vote in opposition to this bill.

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Northern Light Health

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A.R. Gould Hospital
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C.A. Dean Hospital
Eastern Maine Medical Center
Home Care & Hospice
Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Northern Light Laboratory
Northern Light Pharmacy
Sebasticook Valley Hospital