



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Support of:  
LD 1040: An Act to Require Reimbursement for Gender-affirming Care for MaineCare Members**

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Room 209, Cross State Office Building  
Wednesday, April 12, 2023

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland and executive director of Maine Public Health Association.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 700 individual members and 60 organizations across the state. The mission of MPHA is to improve and sustain the health and well-being of all people in Maine through health promotion, disease prevention, and the advancement of health equity. As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges, aiming to improve the policies, systems, and environments that underlie health inequities – but which also have potential to improve health outcomes for all people in Maine. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

MPHA is in support of LD 1040: "An Act to Require Reimbursement for Gender-affirming Care for MaineCare Members." This bill prohibits the MaineCare program from discriminating in its reimbursement for medically necessary treatment based on the MaineCare member's gender identity, gender expression, or on the basis that the MaineCare member is a transgender individual. The bill also requires that the program cover medically necessary treatment for or related to gender dysphoria.

Transgender individuals are frequently subject to stigma and discrimination, including in health care settings. As such, they are at greater risk of poor health outcomes and health-harming behaviors, such as delaying medical care, because of mistreatment and other systemic barriers.<sup>1,2</sup>

Improving access to gender-affirming care will improve health outcomes for transgender patients. Receipt of gender-affirming care has been shown to reduce rates of suicide attempts, depression, anxiety, and substance misuse, and improve medication adherence.<sup>3</sup> When people can access the health care they need, their health – mental, physical, and spiritual – improves. We believe this bill is good public health policy and will help improve health outcomes. We respectfully request you to vote to LD 1040 "Ought to pass." Thank you for considering our testimony.

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson CL, Agénor M, Johnson DA, et al. Sexual orientation identity disparities in health behaviors, outcomes, and services use among men and women in the United States: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health* 2016;16:807.

<sup>2</sup> Kates J, Ranji U, Beamesderfer A, Salganicoff A & Dawson L. [Health and access to care and coverage for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender \(LGBT\) individuals in the U.S.](#) Kaiser Family Foundation. 2018.

<sup>3</sup> State of California, Department of Insurance. Economic impact assessment: Gender nondiscrimination in health insurance. Reg-2011-00023. 2012).