

Janet T. Mills
Governor



Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner

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May 1, 2023

Senator Donna Bailey, Chair
Representative Anne Perry, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 263, *An Act to Ensure Access to Health Care* (sponsor's amendment)
LD 935, *An Act to Remove Barriers to Abortion Coverage in Private Insurance*

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the HCIFS Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share the support of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services for two bills in front of you today: LD 263, *An Act to Ensure Access to Health Care* (as proposed to be amended by the sponsor) and LD 935, *An Act to Remove Barriers to Abortion Coverage in Private Insurance*.

LD 263 would require that any transfer of ownership or control, or the establishment of a new health care facility, may not reduce access to any sexual and reproductive health services including abortion care and provides the Department with the authority to review and enforce compliance with this provision beyond the existing timeframe of three years. As we have seen health care services centralize more and more into health systems, it is important to ensure that further mergers and acquisitions do not impede access to critical services like sexual and reproductive health care. This bill provides a safeguard to prohibit a new or expanding entity from limiting such services in Maine. This is particularly important given the state's rural geography and already-limited access to services in some regions.

LD 935 would build on the Legislature's progress made on access in 2019 (PL 2019, Ch. 274) by ensuring that private health plans (effective January 1, 2024 and later) may not charge any deductible, copay, coinsurance, or any other cost-sharing to individuals accessing abortion services. Access to the full spectrum of sexual and reproductive health care is integral to a person's physical, mental, and economic wellbeing. Prohibiting cost-sharing from these time-sensitive services will improve accessibility to those who need it.

Every person in Maine should have the right to make their own personal medical decisions and access health care when and where they need it. Care should be affordable, high-quality, and free from undue barriers. These bills will strengthen the sexual and reproductive health care safety net in Maine and we encourage the Committee to support their passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jeanne M. Lambrew'.

Commissioner Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D
Maine Department of Health and Human Services