

**State of Maine | 131st Legislature**  
**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**  
**Testimony of Hannah Hudson on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association**  
**May 12, 2023**

Supporting:  
**LD 1837, “An Act to Increase Oral Health Services”**

Sponsored by Representative Lori Gramlich

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Hannah Hudson, Policy and Communications Manager at Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA).

MPCA is a membership organization that includes all of Maine's 20 Community Health Centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Maine's CHCs make up the largest independent primary care network in the state, providing high quality and equitable primary and preventive medical, behavioral, and dental health services for over 200,000 people (1 in 6 Mainers).

MPCA supports LD 1837, and we thank Representative Gramlich and the other cosponsors for bringing this legislation forward. Maine's CHCs are located in rural or underserved areas and operate more than 70 service delivery sites across all 16 Maine counties. Ensuring oral health care access for the communities we serve remains a priority for MPCA and the Community Health Center Network. As an organization, we are focused on supporting CHCs with the expansion of MaineCare's comprehensive adult dental benefit. This includes dental assistant training, addressing health equity needs, and ensuring that CHC voices are included at relevant state-level meetings.

This legislation would provide additional support for the execution of legislative oral health priorities, including the expansion of the Maine CDC School Oral Health Program to all public schools and addressing the needs identified in the implementation of the MaineCare adult dental benefit.

LD 1837 also directs MaineCare to develop an alternative payment pilot for financing school-based oral health services. MPCA has also been focused on building the future infrastructure for Maine's CHC network and looking at alternative payment models that fully support their unique and critical role in the care delivery system. Value-based programs reward providers with incentive payments for the quality of care they give to people. It is a potential replacement for traditional fee-for-service reimbursement, which rewards quantity over quality.

Additionally, this legislation would help Maine CDC by making permanent the Oral Health Educator and Data and Research Assistant positions. This will increase the State's capacity for

data collection and analysis, research on oral health disparities, oral health education efforts, and procurement of federal funding to support oral health work statewide.

On behalf of Maine's Community Health Centers, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [hudson@mepca.org](mailto:hudson@mepca.org) with any follow up questions.

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