

Shawn Cassum
Bangor

I am testifying in support of LD 1955, An Act To Require Hospitals and Hospital-affiliated Providers To Provide Financial Assistance for Medical Care.

I had a heart attack in 2019 and in June of 2021, I was at work and wasn't feeling well. My boss drove me to Northern Light's walk-in care clinic and from there I was transported to Northern Light's emergency room based on my condition. I had insurance and 66 percent free care through the hospital at the time, but I was billed by Northern Light for being transported by ambulance to the ER. That bill was then sent to collections at the Thomas Agency. Even though Northern Light owns both the hospital and the ambulance transport, they have different billing departments that don't talk to each other, which was why I was billed and sent to collections. With help from Devan from CAHC's HelpLine, I requested that my balance be adjusted to 66 percent free care, which was finally done in January of 2023, more than a year and a half later.

I don't have a problem with free care because it helped me get the health care that I desperately needed at the time, but there are some problems with it. With anything else that you go and buy in general you know the price going in, but in the medical industry you really don't. At the very least, hospitals need to give people an idea of what medical services will cost up front so that they can figure out if they can afford it. It feels almost deceptive that we don't know how much hospital services are going to cost before we get them.

Thank you,
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