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Statement of Ladan Mohamed
New Mainers Public Health Initiative
To the Joint Standing Committee On Health and Human Services

Speaking in support of: LD 1955, An Act to Require Hospitals and Hospital-affiliated Providers to Provide Financial Assistance for Medical Care

January 17th, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Ladan Mohamed. I live in Lewiston, Maine. I'm providing this testimony in support of LD 1955, "An Act to Require Hospitals and Hospital-affiliated Providers to Provide Financial Assistance for Medical Care."

I am a Community Health Worker at New Mainers Public Health Initiative, which serves as the leading health related, community-based organization directly serving the needs of the immigrant and refugee youth and their families in Maine.

The reason I am testifying today is because I personally see the issues of the inability to access free care every day. I know many members in the Lewiston and Auburn community who suffer due to poor health and are in chronic pain as a result. However, they cannot relieve themselves of their ailments and pain due to how expensive healthcare is.

Through my work, I have come to recognize that nobody is silently sitting by and allowing themselves to suffer. If these individuals could get the medical attention they need, they would. But they are not supported by our health care system. If they are over income for free care, other insurance is too expensive or otherwise inaccessible due to immigration status. Seeing all of these people go through pain that could be easily cured with just a few visits to the doctor is why I am in support of LD 1955. By increasing the free care income eligibility limits to 200% FPL, more people in these communities would be able to access medically necessary care. Additionally, the bill would help ease other barriers we see in our work, such as language barriers on free care applications and unnecessary application requirements, such as listing assets. Health care should be accessible for everyone, and LD 1955 is a step in the right direction.

Thank you so much for your time. I urge you to support LD 1955.