

The Honorable Senator Joe Baldacci,
The Honorable Representative Michele Meyer
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Cross Building, Room 209, 287-1317
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

VIA EMAIL TO: JointCommittee.PublicHealth@malegislature.gov


Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

On behalf of AHIOS, we are pleased to submit the following comments in support of Maine LD 2151 – An Act Regarding the Cost of Copies of Medical Records.

AHIOS was established in 1996 with a mission to strengthen and enhance the Health Information Management (HIM) outsourcing industry while promoting excellence in the handling and dissemination of confidential patient-identifiable information. To this end, a large component of our work as an organization is focused on pursuing fair and equitable legislative, regulatory, and legal processes that support the release of confidential patient information. AHIOS member companies' services are often provided at no cost to a healthcare organization; our companies operate on the state-regulated fees paid by third-party requesters.

Ultimately, our goal as an organization and industry is to support healthcare organizations in keeping their patients' data secure yet accessible. By partnering with an AHIOS member company, healthcare organizations gain not only operational and financial relief from the ever-growing burden of medical records requests, but they also provide a more efficient, effective, and secure solution for accessing medical records to the constituent that matters most: the patient.

While interoperability between electronic medical record (EMR) applications remains a key national goal, the reality is that a patient's electronic medical records cannot be retrieved with a single click of a mouse. Patient records are often spread across multiple record systems and may still involve paper charts and microfilm records; it requires approximately



45 steps to fulfill a single request for medical records.¹ Our member companies have made significant investments in proprietary technologies that enable the secure collection of patient data from disparate locations and formats, compilation of a complete file, and the subsequent secure distribution of PHI - performing a vital function in fulfilling medical records requests across the healthcare ecosystem.

LD 2151 will update the permissible charges for copies of medical records to reflect the current economic environment. The addition of a CPI adjustment would reduce the need for future legislation. Prior to LD 2151, the medical records copy charges were previously passed in 2013 and accordingly represent paper copies as the primary delivery format for medical record request. The reduced charges for electronic medical record copies reflects the current preferred delivery method for most requesters. This discounted rate may lead traditional requesters to request delivery in an electronic format, which offers increased privacy and security protections to patients. These updates will allow AHIOS companies to invest in the development of new, more user-friendly technologies for the secure and efficient exchange of patient information.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this statement in support of LD 2151 – An Act Regarding the Costs of Copies of Medical Records and ask that you consider supporting this legislation to update the permissible charges for medical record charges.

If the committee feels that additional information from AHIOS companies may be helpful, I am happy to facilitate that process. I can be reached at emcelhiney@verisma.com.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Notz McElhiney, MHA, CHPS, CPHIMS
Regulatory Chair, AHIOS

¹ Our Release of Information (ROI) Process workflow may be found at <https://www.ahios.org/pdf/AHIOS-45-Step-ROI-Process-Poster.pdf>