

Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



January 24, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Health and Human Services committee,

My name is Jan Collins, I am assistant director of Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC) and I am a member of the Franklin County Jail Board of Visitors. I am here neither for or against LD 2151 An Act Regarding the Cost of Copies of Medical Records.

I am here to ask you to carefully consider the repercussions of passage of this bill for those who have recently been incarcerated. I do not know if there will be negative effects, so I am asking you to determine this before its passage.

Perhaps a simple sentence stating that “No medical provider will be considered a third party,” would clarify the situation. If a medical provider requests medical files on a patient it cannot be considered a third party request under this provision.

I make this request because in the first year, after release from jail or prison individuals have an increased chance of death twelve times that of the general population. There are many reasons for that high death rate. Many of those deaths are a result of overdose, but cardiac arrest and cancer are significant contributors.

Factors that give rise to these outcomes include poor medical care in carceral facilities, pre-incarceration health conditions, poor access to health care upon release, lack of financial resources for health care and lack of good nutrition.

A person leaving a carceral facility often has no housing, no job, no phone, or computer, and may not have access to those items. It may be months before they can get an appointment with a primary care provider.

Also, Jails and prisons have contracted medical providers that are not connected to any Maine health care providers, so provision of digital copies may be impossible.

Recently released residents may not understand how to obtain necessary release of information forms.

I would ask that the committee clarify the definition of third party to emphasize that no medical provider can be considered a third party.

Thank-you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jan M. Collins

Assistant Director

Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition

*PO Box 360, E. Wilton, ME 04234
207.578.8419*

Jan Collins
East Wilton/Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition
LD 2151

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