



January 21, 2025

Senator Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair, Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee
Representative Drew Gattine, House Chair, Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee
Honorable members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee
Senator Henry Ingwersen, Senate Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
Representative Michelle Meyer, House Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
Honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Committee members

LeadingAge Maine and New Hampshire represents not-for-profit providers of senior living, independent living, affordable housing, assisted living and residential care, memory care, adult day service, and home health agencies in both states. I have the privilege of representing LeadingAge ME NH members in Maine.

We recognize that your work is weighty and critical to the sustainability of the services and supports that older Mainers and people with disabilities rely on. And we appreciate the care with which you execute on the budget challenges you face. As providers of long term care, and services and supports, we appreciate your partnership and understanding of the equally critical work the provider community across all sectors undertakes each day to assure the highest quality of care and the quality of life that all Mainers deserve at the most vulnerable times of their lives.

Having proudly served as a leader of senior living, independent living and assisted living for most of my career, I understand how financially tenuous the operations of MaineCare supported programs and services can be. I have a clear and personal understanding of the difficult decisions that come with increasing costs when not balanced with commensurate revenues.

It is very clear to me that the Governor's decision not to implement cost of living adjustments for MaineCare programs that serve tens of thousands of Maine citizens of all ages and needs will have harmful impacts to those individuals and will further threaten the narrow margins by which these providers operate within.

We understand that this decision violates Maine Law. As important, this decision will exacerbate the impact of increasing basic operating costs (raw food, insurance, etc) and challenges, as well as the unfunded mandates currently in place.

- increasing staffing and administrative requirements without commensurate reimbursement mechanisms and commitments in place,
- unreimbursed costs related to mandated Paid Family Medical Leave

- daily challenges faced across the state to recruit and retain quality staff members at every level and in every setting
- competition with and reliance on temporary agency staff at exorbitant rates to fill gaps

Delays in the timely implementation of COLAs to MaineCare providers will threaten the ability of providers in every part of our state to continue to serve these citizens at the levels we now see. If providers don't close their doors altogether, we can expect to see many recalibrate (read: reduce) the number of MaineCare members they can continue to serve at any time. This reduction in access will have direct impacts to MaineCare members being able to secure the services and supports that they need at every turn.

LeadingAge ME NH joins with other partners who serve older adults and people living with disability to urge these Legislative Committees to reject the Governor's cut of COLAs to MaineCare providers from this Supplemental Budget.

On behalf of LeadingAge ME NH Members, their staff members and the wonderful people they serve,
Thank You for your thoughtful consideration

Best regards

Denise M. Vachon, BSW, Registered Lobbyist
Member Services and Government Affairs



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