



**Community Health and Counseling Services**  
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Senators Rotundo and Ingwersen, Representatives Gattine and Meyer and distinguished members of the Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services. I am writing in support of LD 209 “An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025.”

Part of LD 209 allocates one-time funding to the MaineCare program, which is crucial for ensuring access to a wide range of health care and long-term services for low-income residents in Maine. Reducing this appropriation would significantly disrupt access to essential care for this vulnerable population.

Underfunding the MaineCare program results in the discontinuation of essential services and/or the reduction in reimbursement for those services. This places enormous challenges on providers to maintain service availability, ultimately impacting the quality of care received by low-income individuals.

Additionally, while not included in this emergency supplemental budget, I would respectfully urge the committees to carefully consider the impact of the state's proposal to suspend MaineCare cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in ongoing budget discussions. The legislature previously enacted a law to ensure access to healthcare services by enacting an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to MaineCare rates. This law is crucial for maintaining equitable and sustainable healthcare services for low-income residents.

The reduction of rates will make it challenging for providers to maintain their level of service provision, which in turn exacerbates the challenge of accessing healthcare services for low-income people. This could lead to increased healthcare disparities and poorer health outcomes in the long run.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments. I appreciate your public service and commitment to the people of Maine. I urge you to consider the long-term impacts of underfunding MaineCare and to prioritize the health and well-being of our most vulnerable residents by supporting LD 209.

Sincerely,

*Dale Hamilton*

Dale Hamilton  
Executive Director