

February 12, 2025

RE: LD 210 Governor's Biennial Budget Proposal

My name is Dan Cunningham and I am the Director of Business Operations at Maxim Healthcare Services (Maxim). Maxim is a national provider of home healthcare, homecare, and additional in-home service options. We provide over 113,000 hours of service per year throughout Maine via our Portland office employing approximately 100 caregivers and nurses, primarily offering private duty nursing (PDN) services. We are also members of the Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine which represents the interests of home health care agencies throughout the state.

PDN is continuous skilled nursing care provided in the home for medically-complex and vulnerable pediatric and adult patient populations under Medicaid, under MaineCare Sections 19 and 96, many of whom require assistive technology such as ventilators and tracheostomies to sustain life. Maxim's nurses serve the most medically fragile individuals in the state – including children with complex chronic conditions (CCC) along with adult patients who require similar services. These individuals require skilled nursing services performed in the home by a registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN) under the supervision of an RN from between 4 to 24 hours per day every day in order to manage their chronic condition safely in their homes and communities. Our goal is to keep these individuals in the setting that promotes their highest quality of life and allows them the opportunity to engage in their Maine Communities.

Maxim is submitting testimony in opposition to LD 210, the Governor's Biennial Budget Proposal. We are concerned about the lack of available funding for MaineCare rate increases for home care services and for MaineCare cost-of-living adjustments (COLA).

Many Maine children and adults with specialized healthcare needs are either not receiving enough nursing services in the home or not able to access these lifesaving services due to the lack of available nurses – stemming from low Medicaid reimbursement rates. Currently, we are unable to admit over 20 Medicaid referrals due to the hardships of finding staff. Our neighboring states are investing in home health care by increasing the reimbursement rates to ensure we are able to compete with hospitals and facilities. Maxim provides PDN services in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island where there have been significant increases. When there are sufficient reimbursement rates, providers are able to bring on more patients and secure adequate staffing.

The quality of life of a medically complex patient is undoubtedly better when they can live in the comfort their home with family. However, the lack of reimbursement rates are a barrier for providers because we are not able to compete with wages for other nursing positions throughout the state. This is the main cause of thousands and thousands of nursing hours not being met for patients that desperately need it. A rate increase will lead to more nursing hours being provided for this population in Maine.

In addition, the annual COLA had been allowing providers to keep up with cost increases to provide care in the home. Without reimbursement rate increases or a COLA, providers will continue to struggle to recruit and retain nurses who oversee the lifesaving services we provide in the home for this medically fragile population.

We urge you to include funding for MaineCare rate increases for home care services in this biennial budget.

Thank you,
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