

Joint Committee on Health & Human Services

March 11, 2025

Shannon L. Carr, MD MS FACOG

Bristol, Maine

To: Senator Henry Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, Members of the Joint Committee on Health & Human Services

My name is Shannon Carr, a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist. I've been practicing in Maine for many years. I'm here to testify on behalf of the Maine Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). National ACOG represents more than 60,000 physicians and partners dedicated to advancing women's health and the health of individuals seeking obstetric and gynecologic care, including 148 members in Maine. As practicing Ob-Gyns across the state committed to providing patient-centered, evidence-based women's health care, the Maine Section of ACOG endorses LD 143, An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services.

Access to comprehensive family planning is an integral component of full spectrum reproductive health care. ACOG advocates for policies that ensure equitable access to quality reproductive health care to patients throughout their lives and asserts that the full array of clinical services must be available to patients without costly delays or the imposition of financial or legal barriers. The critical investment in family planning services under LD 143 ensures that patients can continue to access necessary, quality, evidence-based care no matter their income. As we await actions at the federal level that will have deleterious impact on the Title X program, this bill will provide a critical backstop to ensure that Mainers continue to have access to basic health care services.

Maine families have benefited considerably from the family planning care network across our state, and this translates into an overall healthy economy as it places priority on a wellness model of care. Over 31,000 patients received primary and/ or reproductive health care in Maine's 61-site network in 2023, with more than 70% (21,700) of those patients receiving care for free or at a reduced cost. This care includes testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, birth control, cancer screenings, routine well woman care, vaccinations, and behavioral health services. Cervical and breast cancer screenings serve to detect life-threatening diseases at stages where treatment and cure remain an option. Reliable access to contraception is associated with substantial reductions in unplanned or mistimed pregnancies, thus a reduction in the high costs and citizen tax dollars associated with supporting these pregnancies. Moreover, agency in one's ability to plan their family

allows for the potential of Mainers to achieve educational attainment and economic mobility. We must ensure that systems to support the health and well-being of our citizenry are robust and sustainable.

Safe, quality health care access should never be dependent on a person's income. If you believe that reproductive health care is basic health care, it follows that it is incumbent upon you to support LD 143. The Maine Section of ACOG asks this committee to vote in favor of this bill and fund family planning services in our state to support and value the well-being of Maine women and families.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shannon L. Carr, MD MS FACOG