

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Boyer, Cloutier, Milliken and members of the committee.

My name is Kassi Reyes, and I live in Old Town, Maine. I am writing today to ask you to support **LD865**.

I am an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) serving families across Maine in both in-home and telehealth settings. I am also a Maine mother who personally experienced the life-changing impact of skilled lactation support. Without it, I would not have been able to overcome early breastfeeding challenges and go on to meet my goal of exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued nursing for over two years, in line with recommendations from both the World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Unfortunately, for too many Maine families, this kind of expert support remains out of reach due to financial barriers and lack of insurance coverage. As an IBCLC, I see firsthand how lactation challenges (such as issues with milk supply, latching difficulties, pain, and feeding concerns) can be the determining factor in whether a parent continues breastfeeding or stops prematurely, often not by choice, but due to lack of access to the right support.

IBCLCs don't just support breastfeeding, we also help families navigate bottle feeding and pumping challenges to ensure that babies receive the optimal amount of human milk possible. Many parents who return to work or struggle with low supply need expert guidance on choosing the right pump, maintaining milk production, and ensuring their baby feeds effectively from a bottle. Without access to this specialized support, families will often struggle to continue providing human milk, even when they are committed to doing so. Expanding MaineCare coverage for lactation care means more Maine infants can receive the full benefits of human milk, whether directly at the breast or through expressed milk.

Many families who reach out to me would greatly benefit from multiple visits to fully resolve their infant feeding challenges, yet financial constraints often mean they can only afford one or two appointments - if they can afford any at all. This results in unnecessary breastfeeding struggles, early weaning, and even higher healthcare costs due to increased risks of infections, hospitalizations, and chronic health conditions for both parent and baby.

LD 865 is a critical step toward making lactation support accessible for all families in Maine, regardless of income or insurance status. By requiring MaineCare to reimburse

IBCLCs for services provided in the home, this bill ensures that those who need lactation care the most, new parents recovering from birth, families in rural areas with limited access to providers, and those without reliable transportation, are able to receive the help they need in the most accessible setting possible.

I strongly urge you to support LD 865 and the proposed amendment to include coverage for lactation services in all relevant settings: hospital, clinic, office/community, and home. Every Maine family deserves the opportunity to meet their infant feeding goals with the professional, evidence-based support they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kassi Reyes
IBCLC, RN, MSN, MPH

Ph: 207-200-3138

Address: 513 Brunswick St, Old Town, Maine 04468

Kassi Reyes
Old Town
LD 865

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