

Anne M. Gallaudet  
Scarborough, Maine

March 17, 2025

Re: LD 865, An Act to Require MaineCare to reimburse for Lactation Services in the Homes of Eligible Persons

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

I appreciate this opportunity to address you on this important matter. My name is Anne Gallaudet. I am a resident of Scarborough, Maine. I am writing in support of LD 865.

One of the best uses of state funds, in my opinion, will be in the reimbursement of lactation services in the hospital and in the homes of eligible persons by MaineCare. The short as well as long term benefits of breastfeeding for both babies and parental health are well known. However, not all breastfeeding parents have the same access to both the information on the benefits of breastfeeding and the support needed to begin and continue breastfeeding a new infant. There are serious disparities in maternal health in the United States, particular by income and race which can have lifelong impact for both the birthing parent and the child.

I breastfed my two daughters, now adults around 40 years old. At the time, I was a full-time worker (with some leave time to bond with each child). The equipment available to express milk was painful to use (made of hard plastic and pumped by hand – no electrical pump). I suspect only about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of persons breastfed their baby at that time and not for long. Many persons I personally knew who started to breastfeed their child gave up for a wide range of reasons including the baby failing to latch on, the baby allegedly gaining too much weight, sore breasts or nipples, trying to also work at the same time, etc. Having access to lactation services likely would have made a world of difference.

Since then, breastfeeding has increased in the U.S. due to education on the benefits of breastfeeding, better equipment for pumping and storing milk and the availability of lactation consultants, to help a new parent deal with understanding the benefits of lactation and help address the wide range of challenges that can arise as one attempts to breast feed their new baby. It is crucial that all new eligible parents should have such access, and I believe this bill addresses that.

Thank you for considering my appeal. I urge you to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 865.

Anne Gallaudet, Scarborough, ME