

March 17, 2025

Dear Chair Ingwersen, Chair Meyer, and distinguished Members of the Joint Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Jennifer Mora, and I am a Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC), certified by the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice. I currently live in Peaks Island, Maine. I want to share my thoughts on HP 551/LD 865 – relating to MaineCare coverage of lactation support services. I am writing to request a language amendment and clarification requiring reimbursement of “consultants or counselors who are certified by a national organization that provides a national certification program in lactation consulting or counseling.” Currently, Section 2 of the proposed bill identifies that only services provided by International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) should be covered by MaineCare, but Section 1 of the proposed bill uses the preferred language of nationally certified consultants or counselors. I am asking that the language of Section 1, which is inclusive of both IBCLCs and CLCs, be used throughout all sections of the proposed bill.

I work at a busy primary care clinic at Maine Medical Center. I am a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) with 16 years of experience. In 2022, I endeavored to complete my Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) training and certification to complement my practice as a Family Nurse Practitioner who provides care to mother-baby dyads. In 2023, I earned my Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in Population Health. Population Health considers the drivers for improved health outcomes. Breastfeeding improves the health outcomes of mothers and babies (CDC, 2023).

As of March 14, 2025, 454 CLCs are providing professional lactation support services in the state. There are just 96 IBCLCs in Maine as of February 12, 2025. Both types of professionals are critically important in supporting Maine families on their breastfeeding journeys. Research has demonstrated that lactation support providers positively affect breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates, mainly when a lactation support provider lives in, or is from, the same race and ethnic background as the individual seeking support. Health insurance must cover lactation support to allow equitable access to all families in Maine. Most families cannot afford to pay out of pocket to see a lactation support professional, especially when ongoing support is needed. For these reasons, I am asking the Committee to consider the above amendment for lactation support services provided by both CLCs and IBCLCs to be covered by MaineCare. Thank you for your time, and thank you to the bill sponsor, Representative Boyer, for her work on such significant legislation.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Mora DNP, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, CLC