



March 18, 2025

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

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has worked to build gender justice in Maine through legislative advocacy and systems change.

We are here today in support of **LD 865, "An Act to Require MaineCare to Reimburse for Lactation Services in the Homes of Eligible Persons"** and thank Representative Boyer for sponsoring this important bill.

There are many benefits of breastfeeding for both birthing parents and babies, including lowering the risk of several types of cancers for parents who breastfeed and providing newborns with "uniquely tailored" nutrition<sup>1</sup>. Learning how to breastfeed, however, can be challenging, physically and emotionally, and a parent may need one-time or on-going support.

Lactation Consultants are highly trained and specialized professionals who provide educational and support services tailored to each person's needs and situation. Lactation Consultants are a key element of "comprehensive whole-person care"<sup>2</sup> a care model that acknowledges the high risk-reality of pregnancy, giving birth and postpartum for pregnant people.

A range of lactation services are covered under many private insurance plans, but not under MaineCare. This leaves too many parents without access to these services– paying out of pocket is rarely feasible especially during an already expensive time period. Coverage for independent Lactation Consultants who have more flexibility and accessibility is a key element of making these services effective. Non-hospital based independent Lactation Consultants have the added benefit of being able to travel and having more flexibility with scheduling and hours.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding." National Institute of Health.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK52687/>

<sup>2</sup>Guide for Birth Justice and Community Leaders: Making The Most Of Medicaid's Transforming Maternal Health (TMaH) Model" National Partnership for Women & Families.  
<https://nationalpartnership.org/report/transforming-maternal-health-model-tmah/>

Expanding reimbursement eligibility is also a key way to sustain and stabilize the Lactation Consultant workforce– a workforce that is women-led and dominated. Without consistent financial structures, there is ongoing risk of a shortage of Lactation Consultants, both from those training to enter the workforce and those who leave the workforce due to unsustainable voluntility. Establishing MaineCare reimbursement will allow a larger pool of eligible persons to have access to Lactation Consultants which then supports the Lactation Consultant workforce.

Ensuring that all new parents, including those in the MaineCare program, are able to access lactation consulting services is a key way to promote infant and parental health and safety.

**We hope you will vote Ought to Pass on LD 865.**

Sincerely,

Destie Hohman Sprague, Executive Director  
Maine Women's Lobby