



CITY OF BANGOR

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Testimony in Support of LD 518 – Resolve, Increasing Access to Maternal and Child Health Care

March 19, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Jennifer Doyle, Public Health Program Manager of the City of Bangor, and on behalf of the Bangor City Council I am providing testimony in support of LD 518, "Resolve, Increasing Access to Maternal and Child Health Care."

CradleME offers valuable services to all prenatal, postpartum, and parenting families in Maine, providing them access to home visits from public health nurses, home visitors, and other services. City of Bangor has provided maternal and child health home visits with the CradleME program since 2008 through a contract with Maine Center for Disease Control. From our experience, many families do not access these services, despite their widespread eligibility due to several barriers such as lack of awareness and confusion with the referral system. In reality, every prenatal, postpartum, and parenting family, regardless of demographics, can benefit from these services.

While the Opportunities for Alignment of MCH Efforts in Maine report based on a recent assessment on maternal and child health activities in Maine has been helpful in understanding overarching challenges and opportunities, it is not specifically focused on the CradleME program. Several revisions were made to the CradleME referral form without input from local stakeholders. In addition, there have been dramatic shifts in referrals to Maine CDC contracted agencies for maternal and child health services. This shift jeopardizes the efficiency and effectiveness of home visits with agencies that have a long history of providing high quality, culturally aware services. An assessment of the CradleME system including a workgroup of stakeholders would assist in identifying the issues and determining evidence informed strategies that meets the needs of the community.

We strongly support LD518 as an essential step toward developing a more streamlined and straightforward referral process. This collaboration would ensure that the system better meets the needs of families across Maine and work toward removing barriers to universal access to CradleME services. Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

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