



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Support of:
LD 143: An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning
Services**

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Room 209, Cross Building
Monday, March 10, 2025

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland and executive director of Maine Public Health Association.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 850 individual members and 70 organizations across the state. The mission of MPHA is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine. As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

MPHA supports LD 143: "An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services." This bill establishes the "Fund to Maintain Access to Statewide Family Planning Services," which would provide ongoing funds to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services to award a grant for the management and oversight of family planning services in Maine.

Longstanding systems of health and economic inequity – including access to family planning care – cause continued and documented disparities in educational achievement, financial security, and social status.¹ We all want just and fair opportunities to achieve good health. Actions that correct health inequities are necessary for some and ultimately good for everyone. In the context of family planning care, actions that correct disparities include education about sexuality and health, access to affordable and quality prenatal and postpartum care, paid parental leave and childcare, increased preventive measures and support systems for people living in physically, emotionally, and economically abusive situations, and access to safe, timely, affordable, and respectful care.

At a time when rural healthcare, and specifically maternal and child healthcare, is experiencing a [crisis of closures](#), legislation like this is even more critical for ensuring family planning services are more available and accessible to all people in Maine. We believe this bill is supportive of public health, and we respectfully request the committee vote LD 143 "Ought to Pass." Thank you for considering our testimony.

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Committee on Community-Based Solutions to Promote Health Equity in the United States; Baciu A, Negussie Y, Geller A, et al., editors. [Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity](#). Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2017 Jan 11. 3, The Root Causes of Health Inequity.