



Christine B. Foundation

304 Hancock St, Suite 1A, Bangor, ME 04401



March 27, 2024

Committee on Health and Human Services

RE: Testimony, LD 792 - An Act to Fund Medical Research and Cancer Prevention

Good afternoon, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Matt Dexter. I am the proud executive director of the Christine B. Foundation and a resident of Bangor.

I am here to testify in support of this bill and share its immediate and long-term impact in reducing the burdens caused by Maine's leading cause of death, which is cancer.

On day one of a cancer diagnosis you're filled with uncertainty.

Many in eastern Maine often travel 50-100+ miles to their first treatment, carrying the strain of finances. 30% of homes, despite working are struggling to afford basic needs, even more significant at 53% of people age 65 and older. Upon arriving, they're greeted by their treatment team and a plan is outlined unapologetically, interrupting their work, family stability, and for many it is the first time learning how nutrition plays a role in treatment and recovery. That is the moment CBF enters someone's life.

The Christine B. Foundation is a service-providing nonprofit navigating these financial and physical health crises caused by a cancer diagnosis for those in eastern Maine.

We've been trusted by healthcare partners, community organizations, and patients across Maine facing cancer for ten years, now primarily supporting this community by offering medically tailored grocery packages at no cost through treatment and into recovery.

Patient advocates, nurses, dietitians, or other providers make a warm handoff to CBF's team housed within Northern Light Cancer Care, Northern Light Mayo Hospital, or through a phone call at the beginning of their treatment.

Fresh Produce, grains, protein, liquid formula and other healthy foods are prepared for the patients, tailoring this package to their needs and preferences. Patients leave this day with products in hand, equivalent to 30 meals, and thanks to philanthropic dollars CBF prescribes 18 months of this service, available once a week, for home delivery across 11,500 square miles or picked up at their treatment site. This integrated care is more than food, it's a box of soul for the 1,500 supported last year alone which was a 50% increase compared to the prior year.

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This bill will support a one-time pilot project. It will demonstrate clinical evidence-based findings on the impact of healthy foods and dietitian counseling on health outcomes, medical expenses, and quality of life through cancer treatment and recovery. Further, it will establish procedures and policies for health care, insurance, and community-based organizations to implement these outcomes in a compliant, scalable, and cost-saving manner.

The structure of this applied research project is a three-arm randomized control trial. Pending Northern Light Health Institutional Review Board approval, member hospitals are to recruit eligible patients, with CBF and contracted staff performing study interventions, along with a robust volunteer workforce contributing a value of \$300,000.

National findings suggest significant cost savings will result from these interventions for insurance payers. 70% of the cost of this pilot project has been secured by individual, corporate, and private funders, with this fiscal note securing the remaining funds. Despite how Maine proceeds with this health care opportunity, data is required to guide that discussion, which is why I am here before you today. Thank you for your time and I am willing to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Matt Dexter

Executive Director

matt@chrisbfund.org



Matt Dexter
Bangor
LD 792

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