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Commissioner



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March 28, 2025

Senator Carney, Chair  
Representative Kuhn, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 975 – *An Act to Repeal Laws Allowing Abortion and to Criminalize Abortion*

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to provide information in opposition to LD 975, *An Act to Repeal Laws Allowing Abortion and to Criminalize Abortion*.

This bill repeals the laws authorizing abortion in the State, redefines "person" for purposes of the Maine Criminal Code, including for purposes of the statutes prohibiting murder, assault, domestic violence assault and other offenses against a human being or a person, by defining "human being" to include all human beings beginning at the moment of conception. It strikes 'termination of a pregnancy' from being included as reproductive health care.

The Department strongly opposes LD 975 as a matter of public health and individual rights. This bill would restrict access to medically necessary care and treatment for women in Maine, discourage women from seeking necessary medical care, and force women and their loved ones to make critical life decisions regarding their health and future without complete information. In addition, removing confidentiality protections for providers of these services will likely discourage providers from offering reproductive health care and practicing in Maine at a time when access to care is already limited.

The Department strongly supports Maine's current law and public policy, as reflected in Governor Janet Mill's Executive Order 4 FY 21/22: *An Order Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Care Services in Maine*, to protect a woman's choices in reproductive health care, including the decision to terminate a pregnancy. Currently, Maine law ensures health coverage for reproductive health care by requiring public and private health insurers to cover family planning services, abortion services, and pregnancy-related services as permitted by federal law.

By excluding health care and education relating to abortion from "Family planning services", LD 975 eliminates, for both Maine healthcare providers and patients, important components of discussions about concerns regarding reproductive health. According to the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, laws that require physicians to give, or withhold, specific information when counseling patients, or that mandate which tests, procedures, treatment alternatives or medicines physicians can perform, prescribe, or administer are ill-advised. All medical providers – including reproductive health providers – are ethically bound to provide patients with information about their health care options, procedure details and

any other information a provider deems pertinent to each individual patient to allow the patient to make an informed decision.

Evidence shows restricting access to abortion services has impact on State economies, including increased health costs related to unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortion practices, and loss of insurance due to decreased labor force participation. While the Department cannot calculate the state-wide financial impact of this bill, it is estimated the bill will result in additional MaineCare expenditures of approximately \$20,830,649 annually, \$7,698,437 in State dollars and \$13,132,212 in federal funds.

In terms of reporting requirements in LD 975, current law (22 MRS s. 1596) already requires providers to report miscarriages to the Department; however, this data is generally not usable for public health activities due to its poor quality. This reporting requirement is a burden on already stretched providers; in addition, not all miscarriages are reported as women do not always seek medical attention when a miscarriage occurs or if it happens early in the gestation when a woman may not be aware they are pregnant. As a result, there is likely significant underreporting, resulting in data which is incomplete and inconsistent.

Together, with Maine Office of MaineCare Services and Division of Licensing and Certification, Maine CDC opposes passage of LD 975, urging the Committee not to jeopardize women's health and create healthcare access issues. Access to the full spectrum of reproductive health care is integral to a person's physical, mental, and economic well-being. Every person in Maine has the right to make their own personal medical decisions and to access sexual and reproductive health care when and where they need it. It is critical that everyone in Maine has access to affordable, high-quality health care, including reproductive services – and that they can obtain them free from harassment, intimidation, and undue barriers to services.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,



Puthiery Va  
Director  
Maine Center for Disease Control  
Maine Department of Health and Human Services