



LD 792 An Act to Fund Medical Research and Cancer Prevention

Testimony in Support March 27, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN. I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations speaking in support of this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with more than 10,000 employees statewide.

Christine B Foundation services address poverty, cancer and nutrition in Maine working to improve the health and well-being of cancer patients including patients receiving care from Northern Light Health.

At Northern Light Mayo Hospital in Dover Foxcroft the foundation staff serve healthy nutritious food to our cancer patients. There are no barriers, the program is committed to serving our patients with cancer. The foundation provides medically tailored food bags for weekly pick up or when patients can't come to the hospital food is delivered to their home. Patients and our clinical staff report that the program makes a significant difference to our patients by removing the cost of food from the list of financial challenges in this rural economically challenged region of our State.

At the Northern Light EMMC Cancer Center staff from the foundation have a table in the lobby twice per week for our patients. Patients collect a variety of nutritious foods including fresh vegetables to bring home. For patients unable to come to the cancer center location on a regular basis, volunteers with the foundation provide home delivery.

The foundation reports that they have prepared and distributed healthy foods equivalent to 507,000 meals, reaching individuals across Maine, 93% living in poverty, 69% food insecure, and 39% socially isolated.

This bill provides one time funding to the Christine B Foundation to support a research project to evaluate the impact of access to medically tailored groceries and dietician counseling on cancer to patients and their families. 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 foundation and contracted staff performing study interventions,

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Eastern Maine Medical Center
Home Care & Hospice
Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Northern Light Pharmacy
Sebasticook Valley Hospital

along with a robust volunteer workforce providing support to the project. This bill provides \$300,000 to fund the research.

We ask that you support this legislation.