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Senator Henry Ingwerson
Representative Michele Meyer
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

March 31, 2025

RE: Testimony in support of LD 1079, "An Act to Provide Comprehensive Perimenopause and Menopause Education"

Dear Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

Maine Family Planning urges your support for LD 1079, "An Act to Provide Comprehensive Perimenopause and Menopause Education."

Maine Family Planning provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care to teens and adults at 19 locations statewide. Our mission is to ensure that all people have access to high-quality, culturally relevant and affordable sexual and reproductive health care services, comprehensive sexual health education, and the right to control their sexual and reproductive lives. This includes providing our patients with information about perimenopause and menopause, supporting them in addressing symptoms, and offering treatment options.

Maine Family Planning has been providing statewide access to sexual and reproductive healthcare for over 50 years and is intimately familiar with the cultural shame towards all topics considered women's health/experienced by those who menstruate. Menstruation itself is still stigmatized and for teens today, period products still aren't guaranteed in Maine's school systems. For a young person menstruation remains a part of life they have to deal with on their own, purchasing products outside of school, managing their cycle in isolation instead of having these basic necessities available in bathrooms alongside toilet paper and soap.

Perimenopause and menopause are even more stigmatized. And to make the situation more dangerous, there is less known about both. At a time in life when risks of cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis increase, people who menstruate (or until recently, used to menstruate) know even less about what is happening to their bodies, the symptoms they may experience, things they can do to maintain quality of life and prevent future health conditions. Anything Maine can do to increase education and awareness is a long-overdue step in the right direction.

As Dr. Jen Gunter writes in her 2021 book, *The Menopause Manifesto* “Women want more information about menopause and that knowledge can reduce suffering. Knowing what’s happening to your body and that you’re not alone in your experiences is powerful medicine. Facts empower women to make the health decisions that work for them - you can’t be an informed patient with inaccurate information.”

Maine Family Planning is thrilled that the Maine Legislature is discussing these important issues. We urge you to vote “ought to pass” on this significant step towards great awareness and understanding of perimenopause and menopause.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Olivia Pennington
Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement
Maine Family Planning