

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support for

LD 1429, *An Act to Provide Full Reimbursement for Emergency Ambulance Services Provided to MaineCare Members*

April 17, 2025

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Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am submitting testimony neither for nor against on behalf of Maine Municipal Association for LD 1429, *An Act to Provide Full Reimbursement for Emergency Ambulance Services Provided to MaineCare Members*, at the direction of our 70 member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC).

The ability for emergency services to receive reimbursement for care they provide on scene that does not result in transportation to a hospital, which would be reimbursable in any other care setting, along with increasing the amount of reimbursement for allowable care form two key priorities of MMA's legislative platform.

Unlike law enforcement where county sheriffs and the state police are available to provide backup services, there is not a state or county response unit available to assist when a community does not have the staffing, funds, or call volume necessary to support an ambulance service. Hospital-based services are also facing similar funding and staffing challenges. Due to the insurance reimbursement issues, many of those hospital-based services are making operational decisions to not provide emergency response. This shifts the burden to existing municipal based services forcing those established in some communities to expand their response to adjacent communities.

Ambulances lose money the moment they drive out of the parking lot under the current reimbursement rate. Additionally problematic is a cap on other private insurance reimbursements in statute that is tied to the incredibly low MaineCare reimbursement rate which limits private insurance to paying 200% of the rate even when the same company would pay more for the same service in an adjacent state. This means that the local community is on the hook for the remainder of the cost of to operate and provide the service to anyone—resident or not—that requires an ambulance response.

LD 1429 would improve the reimbursement rate for all services prioritizing those who provide emergency response and currently provide the bulk of the unreimbursed emergency care to MaineCare eligible residents. This will result in direct savings to the property taxpayers who

are forced to shoulder the burden of costs for maintaining the service either through appropriations to an interlocal regional service or directly municipal emergency service.

For these reasons, municipal officials respectfully ask you to support LD 1429 and additionally, consider expanding the reimbursement rate to cover emergency care provided on scene without resulting in a transport, that would be reimbursable in any other healthcare setting by similarly licensed providers.