Testimony of Trevor Putnoky
to the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

In Support of

LD 1497, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Primary Care Reporting by the Maine Quality Forum and to Establish the Primary Care Advisory Council

April 22, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

My name is Trevor Putnoky and I'm the President and CEO of the Healthcare Purchaser Alliance of Maine. The HPA is a nonprofit that represents the purchasers of health care in Maine. Our mission is to advance and support access to high-quality, affordable care. We have over 60 members, including some of the largest public and private employers and health trusts in Maine. Collectively, our members spend over a billion dollars annually providing health care for nearly one quarter of the commercially insured population in the state.

I'm here today to testify in support of LD 1497. Primary care plays a vital, foundational role in Maine's healthcare system. Primary care providers serve as the first point of contact for most individuals seeking care, and they are able to address a broad range of health concerns, prevent illness, and manage chronic conditions. By fostering long-term relationships with their patients, primary care providers have the ability to improve health outcomes, enhance patient satisfaction, and reduce overall healthcare costs. Indeed, studies have found that adults who regularly visit their PCPs have 33 percent lower health costs[1] and that every dollar increase in primary care spend results in $13 in savings.[2] Yet our healthcare system continues to under-invest in primary care, often leaving patients with no access to these critical services, particularly in rural areas. Nationwide, primary care accounts for 35 percent of healthcare visits, yet only receives 5.4 percent of all healthcare dollars.[3]

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[1] P Franks, K Fiscella, "Primary care physicians and specialists as personal physicians. Health care expenditures and mortality experience," *J Fam Pract.* 1998 Aug;47(2):105-9. PMID: 9722797. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9722797/.

[2] Glen Stream, Michael Tuggy, "Delivering value in healthcare starts with increased primary care investment," *Medical Economics,* August 6, 2018. Available at: https://www.medicaleconomics.com/view/delivering-value-healthcare-starts-increased-primary-care-investment.

[3] Purchaser Business Group on Health, *Purchaser Innovation and Policy Engagement Against a Backdrop of Unaffordability and Fiduciary Risk*, March 31, 2025. Available at: https://www.pbgh.org/tag/primary-care/#:~:text=Advanced%20primary%20care's%20power%20to,spending%20produces%20$13%20in%20savings.

LD 1479 will convene experts and other stakeholders to identify the strategies necessary to ensure that high-quality primary care is accessible to all Mainers. It will also ensure that these efforts are supported by key data related to the state's current investment in primary care, the primary care workforce, and access to primary care. We are grateful to Rep. Zager for his continuing efforts to advance—and improve financial support for—primary care in Maine. We also appreciate that LD 1497 would include an employer representative on the Primary Care Advisory Council. In Maine, employers provide health insurance coverage for nearly half of the population.[4] As the state explores ways to enhance access and support for primary care, we believe it's important that employers—who finance so much of the care provided in Maine—have a seat at the table and a voice in developing the strategies that will strengthen the system and improve the health of Mainers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the HPA's feedback on LD 1497. I'd be happy to answer any questions and will be available for the work session.

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[4] Kaiser Family Foundation, *Health Insurance Coverage of the Total Population: 2023.* Available at: https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D.