

Testimony in Support of LD 1835:
An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of **LD 1835 – An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation**.

I have spent the majority of my over 20-year career working in the healthcare industry in our state. I have seen firsthand the devastation the lack of transportation can have on our most vulnerable Mainers. **Transportation is not just about getting from point A to point B — it is about access to life-saving care, economic opportunity, and community well-being.** Every day, MaineCare’s non-emergency transportation (NET) system provides over 1 million rides across our state — to dialysis treatments, chemotherapy sessions, behavioral health appointments, and essential services for children and people with disabilities. When those rides don’t show up, the consequences are serious: missed appointments, worsened health outcomes, unnecessary hospitalizations, and growing pressure on an already strained healthcare system.

LD 1835 proposes four critical improvements to MaineCare NET — each of which will help this system work better for the people it is designed to serve:

1. **Public Accountability:** A publicly accessible performance dashboard will allow all stakeholders — from state officials to community members — to see how the system is working, where gaps exist, and what needs improvement. Transparency drives trust and better outcomes.
2. **Consumer Advocacy:** An independent ombudsman will give riders a clear and comfortable pathway to raise concerns and ensure they are heard. Too many MaineCare members currently feel ignored when problems arise.
3. **Community Engagement:** Regional advisory committees that include meaningful participation from stakeholders — including riders — will bring local knowledge to the table, improving both the design and delivery of services.
4. **Operational Efficiency:** With improved oversight and stakeholder feedback, we can reduce service disruptions, improve customer satisfaction, and help MaineCare deliver on its promise of access to care.

These are not radical changes — they are commonsense steps to ensure Maine’s largest public transportation investment, backed by over \$85 million in combined state and federal funding, is being used effectively and responsibly. We already know that **every \$1 invested in non-emergency medical transportation yields an \$11 return in avoided healthcare costs.** LD 1835 is a cost-effective way to strengthen that return and build a transportation system that doesn’t leave anyone behind.

I urge you to **vote YES on LD 1835.** Let’s tune up this essential program and keep Mainers on the road to better health.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Maine’s communities.

Sincerely,

Angela Fileccia, LCSW
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Penquis Board Member
Orono, Maine