



May 5, 2025

Re: LD-1835 An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation

Introduction

On behalf of Community Care Partnership of Maine (CCPM), I write to express our collective support of LD-1835, an *Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation*.

CCPM is a mission-driven Accountable Care Organization (ACO), comprised of 21 non-profit health care organizations across the State of Maine, including 17 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and 4 community hospitals.

CCPM member organizations provide care to some of the state's most vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals, medically and socially complex populations, older adults, and those confronting substantial social determinants of health (SDOH) barriers, such as homelessness.

Many of our member organizations serve a high percentage of transportation-disadvantaged patients, due to age, income status, and physical and mental disabilities, who rely on non-emergency medical transportation to attend healthcare appointments, often many miles from their home. Therefore, CCPM writes in favor of establishment of the improvements to MaineCare NET, the program overseen by the Office of MaineCare Services (OMS) that awards contracts to transportation brokers in each region of the state to ensure MaineCare patients can receive transportation support to attend their medical appointments. The improvements outlined in LD 1835 will ensure MaineCare NET works better for everyone, including patients, providers, transportation brokers and state government.

Importance of Non-Emergency Transportation in Maine's Healthcare System

Transportation plays a central role in so many aspects of our lives, including dependable and accessible rides to attend healthcare appointments. However, many families and individuals in Maine lack safe, affordable and reliable transportation. Data shows that 3 in 5 Mainers are experiencing transportation insecurity and that 20% of all Mainers live in areas where they need to travel 30 miles or more to be seen by a primary care provider. Among those Mainers who experience transportation insecurity, 80% of them report experiencing **poor health** and 8% report having to **often reschedule** a medical appointment because of a problem with transportation. MaineCare NET is intended to prevent missed appointments and ensure every MaineCare member gets the care they need, when they need it.

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Due to the rurality of our state, the health outcomes of Mainers are explicitly tied to transportation access. To continue our efforts in improving health outcomes and providing the best care for chronic and preventative diseases, such as diabetes and cancer, we must work together to make MaineCare's non-emergency transportation system more efficient and effective.

Challenges with Community Transportation

MaineCare NET is by far Maine's largest investment in public transportation, utilizing a \$25 million General Fund investment to leverage more than \$60 million in additional federal funds. Each year, MaineCare NET provides over 1 million rides to MaineCare covered services, including preventive care, cancer care and chemotherapy, life extending dialysis treatments, substance use disorder treatment and recovery, care and supports for people with intellectual disabilities, and supports for children who need individualized services to attend school. When working smoothly, MaineCare NET maximizes the impact and value of MaineCare coverage. National research shows that for every \$1 spent on non-emergency transportation to Medicaid covered services, \$11 in health care costs are avoided.

Despite the current financial investment and clear positive return, too many MaineCare members report challenges using MaineCare NET, coupled with a sense that their concerns are not being addressed. Additionally, OMS has limited staff to oversee the contracts with regional transportation brokers. For CCPM members, this reality often means lost revenue and missed opportunities to care for their patients.

How LD-1835 Helps Protect Patients and Healthcare in Maine

LD-1835 aims to ensure MaineCare NET works better for everyone. This legislation would help Maine get a greater return on investment for transportation dollars and provide better health access and outcomes to people and communities across the State. LD-1835 would carry out three timely improvements:

- 1) Create and maintain a public-facing dashboard of key performance indicators, that reports monthly on all non-emergency transportation trips, by region and category, including completions, timeliness, safety, and service incidents.
- 2) Establish an independent ombudsman program to make it easy and comfortable for consumers to bring forward concerns and ensure service grievances are resolved.

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- 3) Ensure key stakeholders are engaged in the non-emergency transportation advisory committees in each region and empowered to make recommendations to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and customer satisfaction.

We are pleased to offer our collective support of LD-1835. We are confident, if passed and signed into law, this legislation would have a tremendously positive impact on access to care statewide, leading to fewer missed medical appointments, and greater satisfaction with transportation services and health outcomes.

Sincerely,

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Community Care Partnership of Maine Network

- Bucksport Regional Health Center
- Cary Medical Center
- Community Clinical Services, Inc.
- Eastport Health Care, Inc.
- Fish River Rural Health
- Greater Portland Health
- Harrington Family Health Center
- Health Access Network
- HealthReach Community Health Centers
- Hometown Health Center
- Islands Community Medical Service Inc.
- Katahdin Valley Health Center
- Maine Mobile Health Program *Affiliate Member
- Millinocket Regional Hospital
- Mount Desert Island Hospital
- Nason Health Care
- Pines Health Services

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- Regional Medical Center at Lubec
- Sacopec Valley Health Center
- St. Croix Regional Family Health Center
- St. Joseph Healthcare

For more information about CCPM, please visit www.ccpmaine.org

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