



Testimony in Support of LD 1835 – An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation

Provided by: Noelle Coyne, Chief Executive Officer, Western Maine Community Action

May 9, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Noelle Coyne, and I serve as Chief Executive Officer of Western Maine Community Action (WMCA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals and families across Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford counties. As a Community Action Agency, we see every day how transportation influences access to care, housing stability, workforce participation, and overall well-being.

In Western Maine, many of the individuals and families we serve depend on Nonemergency Transportation (NET) to get to medical appointments, dialysis, mental health services, and other critical care. When those rides don't happen, or happen unreliably, it causes real disruption. One man had to wait over two hours outside a medical facility after dialysis, with no warm place to rest while he recovered. In another case, a resident reported repeated late arrivals to counseling sessions, making it harder to stay consistent with care and undermining her trust in the system. These incidents reflect breakdowns in a system that people rely on for their health and safety.

LD 1835 provides tools that would help prevent and respond to situations like these. A public performance dashboard would make it easier to track problems such as delays and missed pickups, while a statewide ombudsman would give riders a clear point of contact when things go wrong. These structures offer a way to identify gaps, elevate concerns, and support better results for the people we serve.

However, there is currently no clear public reporting on how the NET system is functioning, no way to track whether rides are being completed on time, how complaints are handled, or whether providers are meeting expectations. When transportation is as essential as a prescription or a diagnosis, the lack of accountability has serious consequences.

These are not burdensome requirements, they are reasonable, responsible practices that reflect how we manage every other essential service. If we want to ensure this program is delivering what it promises, we need a way to measure outcomes and address problems efficiently and respectfully.

Community organizations like WMCA want to be part of the solution. We want to work in partnerships to improve systems. LD 1835 provides the accountability infrastructure we need to do that well.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to strengthening transportation access for MaineCare members across our state.

Sincerely,

Noelle Coyne

Chief Executive Officer

Western Maine Community Action

Assisting people in eliminating barriers to self-sufficiency and improving their quality of life.

20A Church Street • P.O. Box 200 • East Wilton, Maine 04234 • (207) 645-3764 • www.wmca.org