

Testimony of Trevor Putnoky

to the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

In Opposition to

LD 1663, HP 1104, LD 1663

An Act Relating to Health Care Transparency and the Maine Health Data Organization

May 6, 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. I'm the President and CEO of the Healthcare Purchaser Alliance of Maine and I'm here today to testify in opposition to LD 1663. 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.

The data available through the Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO) is a tremendous resource for consumers, healthcare purchasers, and policy makers in Maine. CompareMaine is particularly valuable for consumers and employers, who can use the site to compare the average paid amount for common procedures across different providers. As I've shared with the committee before, in the commercial insurance market, prices for many shoppable healthcare services can vary considerably depending on which provider you utilize. For the many Maine consumers and businesses struggling with the cost of care, CompareMaine is a valuable and easy-to-use resource that helps them shop for the most affordable options. I regularly use CompareMaine myself to shop for care, and it has saved my family thousands of dollars. HPA also promotes the site with all of our members, to make sure that they—and their employees and dependents—are aware of this invaluable resource.

LD 1663 would require MHDO to include similar data for public payers on CompareMaine, including MaineCare and Medicare. But while paid amounts in the commercial market can vary dramatically by provider, there is very little variation in MaineCare and Medicare reimbursement rates. Hence, posting MaineCare and Medicare rates by provider would be of little utility to participants in those programs. Moreover, MaineCare already posts that data on their own website, for anyone wishing to access that information.

If MHDO had unlimited resources, HPA wouldn't necessarily be concerned with inclusion of public payor data on CompareMaine, but as the committee is well aware, the Legislature has asked MHDO to take on several new data collecting and reporting responsibilities over the last few years, including reporting on prescription drug utilization and costs, facility fees, and 340B. And as new priorities emerge, I'm sure the Legislature will continue to turn to MHDO to gather, evaluate, and report on data needed to inform policy deliberations and help consumers to find affordable care that best meets their needs. LD 1663 would divert limited resources away from those priority activities to instead publish data that provides little value to Mainers participating in public programs such as MaineCare and Medicare.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns with LD 1663, and to also express our appreciation for the important work that MHDO undertakes to help improve affordability for families and employers in our state. We urge you to oppose legislation that would divert limited organizational resources to low-value activities, and to instead allow MHDO to continue focusing its work on delivering high-value data, reporting, and analyses to the people of Maine.

I'd be happy to answer any questions and will be available for the work session.