



**Testimony of Marge Kilkelly on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Health and Human Services**

**In Favor of LD 1835 An Act to Improve Nonemergency
MaineCare Transportation**

Submitted May 9, 2025

Thank you Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am a Policy Consultant for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) which is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. The MCOA is a unifying force across sectors that is creating a new narrative about aging and older people in Maine with the goal of building local, statewide, and national support for the systemic changes needed to support our new longevity.

I am testifying in Favor of LD 1835 An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation.

Transportation is one of the core social determinants of health. In 2022, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimated that about 13% of people 70 and older did not have a driver's license. In Maine, this translates to about 29,031 people age 70 and older who do not hold a current driver's license. Older adults on MaineCare who can't drive and don't have access to public transportation often rely on MaineCare NET for their nonemergency medical appointments.

Nonemergency medical transportation is an essential part of health care. MaineCare NET provides over 1 million rides a year for preventive care, cancer care, chemotherapy, life extending dialysis treatments, substance use disorder treatment and recovery, care and supports for people with intellectual disabilities. Nonemergency care is essential care and national research shows that for every \$1 spent on non-emergency transportation to Medicaid covered services, \$11 in health care costs are avoided.

MaineCare NET is a critical service for older rural Maine residents and with the improvements proposed in this bill they will be better served.

- Consumers will be able to use the public-facing dashboard to be informed about timeliness, service issues, and safety in their region.
- The establishment of an independent Ombudsman will create a process for consumers to raise concerns and have them resolved. If the Ombudsman were to provide an annual report to the Committees overseeing Health and Human Services and Transportation the information provided could guide future policy decisions.
- Stakeholder involvement in the regional advisory committees will provide opportunities for recommendations based on personal experiences, concerns and ideas.

MCOA would recommend that the Advisory Committee also include a member representing providers of services for older persons.

I urge your support of LD 1835.