

By Electronic Mail Only

May 8, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Taxation
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1652

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the Committee, I am Brian Duffy, Vice President and General Counsel at Delta Dental Plan of Maine d/b/a Northeast Delta Dental ("Delta Dental"). As Maine's largest dental benefits administrator, Delta Dental administers dental benefits for over 350,000 Mainers and contracts with a network of 650 dentists, 72 independent practice dental hygienists (IPDHs), and 12 denturists.

At Delta Dental, our mission is to advance the dental health and overall wellness of our customers and the communities we serve. We recognize that a robust and well distributed dental workforce is essential to carrying out this mission. Accordingly, we invest hundreds of thousands of dollars annually into oral health clinics, school-based oral health programs, and other oral health initiatives to break down barriers faced by underserved (uninsured and underinsured) people in our state with otherwise unmet oral health needs. We also fund scholarships and loan repayment programs for dentists and hygienists who practice in underserved areas or treat underserved populations, including MaineCare Members.

Delta Dental strongly advocated for the establishment the MaineCare adult dental program to close gaps in access to oral health care. But establishment of the benefit was only the first step. The MaineCare program requires a robust network to provide the care MaineCare Members need. To help build and support the MaineCare dental network, we expressly tie many of our student loan repayment awards to MaineCare participation. Despite these interventions, the MaineCare Members continue to face challenges accessing care.

As a participant in the MaineCare Advisory Committee dental subcommittee, we hear firsthand from dental offices that MaineCare participation has brought operational and financial challenges. By financially incenting dentists to participate in MaineCare and by providing further support for the program in the MaineCare office, LD 1652 takes important steps towards addressing these challenges. Addressing these issues should, in turn, improve access to care for MaineCare Members. For these reasons, we strongly support LD 1652 and ask that this Committee vote that it ought to pass.

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Sincerely,

\s\ Brian Duffy

Brian Duffy, Esq.