

Lake Marshburn-Ersek
Gorham
LD 1835

Testimony of Lake Marshburn-Ersek, resident of Gorham
Supporting: LD 1835 An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation -
Sponsored by Senator Richard Bennett

May 9, 2025

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

My name is Lake and I am a resident of Gorham. I support LD 1835 and appreciate Senator Bennett and the other cosponsors for bringing this legislation forward.

Throughout my time as a recipient of MaineCare, I have struggled to access medical appointments. I have canceled and rescheduled many of them due to a lack of access to adequate transportation options. When I talked to my providers about using a service like ModivCare, they cautioned me that some patients have had adverse experiences, including rides not showing up; or not showing up on time. Additionally, I wasn't sure about the availability of a driver who would be respectful of my gender identity and expression. I haven't been sure whether, with services like ModivCare, I can expect to get to appointments on time and to have a positive interaction with the driver.

If I could view data about the rides, such as the record of timeliness, cleanliness, passenger experience, and more, I would be more likely to request rides when I need them and less likely to delay medical care. It would also be helpful to have a system to address complaints and grievances promptly - for drivers, passengers, and other medical transportation support staff.

Perhaps ModivCare and other medical ride providers could have a system where the drivers rate the passengers and the passengers rate the drivers - similar to other rideshare services - allowing both parties to feel comfortable accepting and offering rides.

Another suggestion is to develop a code of conduct for medical rides that would apply to both drivers and passengers. With an enhanced user interface for drivers and passengers, improved organizational transparency, and a culture of respect and acceptance, I think medical ride providers could truly improve health outcomes for MaineCare recipients. When we don't delay medical care, we don't get as sick. When we don't get as sick, we maintain better overall health. When we are healthy and well, we can keep up with our daily lives, and we are better able to care for ourselves and our loved ones.

Thank you for listening to my perspective. Please vote Ought to Pass.

Kind Regards,
Lake Marshburn-Ersek