



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

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

My name is Victoria Morales and I am the Executive Director of Quality Housing Coalition (QHC), a public health nonprofit with a theory of change that prioritizes stable housing and long-term support to maintain it, enabling interventions in healthcare, education, and financial advancement to achieve meaningful and lasting impact. Since 2018, QHC has secured stable sustainable housing for over 1,200 households - benefiting 3,000 adults and children. These households are all low-income and housing cost-burdened, and are often excluded from the rental market due to poor credit, eviction history, and/or criminal records. By serving as real estate brokers, financial guarantors, and mediators throughout tenancies, QHC addresses a critical gap for cost-burdened renters, who now make up nearly half of all renters in Maine.

Our residents, scattered over seven (7) counties include, but are not limited to: people with unmet medical needs, young adults who grew up in the foster care system, immigrants seeking asylum, older adults on fixed incomes, and victims of interpersonal violence. The majority of our residents qualify for MaineCare and do not have their own form of transportation.

Our Health Outreach program works with residents in their homes to assess their health needs, assist with MaineCare applications, connect them with primary care providers, and offer education on health and medication management - all with the aim of fostering healthy habits and reducing unnecessary emergency room visits.

The transportation challenges our residents face are significant, and the current nonemergency MaineCare transportation system is unreliable, creating significant barriers for clients who need to access medical care. This lack of dependable transportation prevents many residents from attending essential health appointments, undermining their ability to improve both their health outcomes and financial stability.

We support the intent of this bill, which aims to enhance public input to improve this service through the establishment of an ombudsman, an advisory council, and a data dashboard. We believe that increased transparency will lead to meaningful improvements, ensuring the service Maine invests in better meets the needs of those it is designed to help.



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Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and thank you for your unwavering commitment to Maine people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vict Morales".

Victoria Morales
Executive Director
Quality Housing Coalition
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