

Testimony for the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee

Subject: LD 1785 – Preserving Access and Protecting Rural and Underserved Communities

Presented by Dr. Luc J. Dionne, chiropractor, Lewiston, Maine

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Dr. Luc J. Dionne, and I am a chiropractor practicing in Lewiston, Maine. I'm here today to speak not only on behalf of my own practice, but on behalf of patients across rural and underserved communities in Maine who are at risk of losing access to essential chiropractic care.

Chiropractic care is not an elective or luxury service. It's a safe, non-invasive, and cost-effective way to manage pain, maintain mobility, and support physical function — especially critical for working Mainers who rely on their bodies every day. In areas like Lewiston and across rural Maine, chiropractic physicians are often one of the few accessible providers for musculoskeletal health.

But we are in crisis. Reimbursement rates for chiropractic services have not increased since 2012, despite the rising costs of delivering care. In fact, major third-party insurers have reduced reimbursement rates by an average of 25% over the last decade. Meanwhile, Maine's minimum wage has nearly doubled — from \$7.50 an hour in 2015 to \$14.65 today in 2025. Every aspect of running a practice — from wages to rent, insurance, supplies, and technology — has increased dramatically, yet we are still being reimbursed at outdated and declining rates.

This is not sustainable. Practices like mine are being forced to make tough decisions: reduce staff, cut services, shorten hours, or consider shutting down. And when that happens, the people who suffer most are our patients — hardworking Mainers who lose access to care they depend on.

Let me give you an example. One of my patients, John, is a 58-year-old logger who's dealt with chronic back pain for years. Chiropractic care allowed him to stay in the workforce without relying on opioids or undergoing surgery. If local access to care disappears, John — and others like him — will have no choice but to travel long distances, turn to emergency rooms, or go without treatment entirely.

This is not just a provider issue. It is a public health issue, and it is a rural equity issue.

I respectfully urge this committee to recognize the essential role chiropractic care plays in the broader healthcare system — and especially in rural Maine. We need your leadership to support fair, sustainable reimbursement policies that reflect the true cost of delivering care

and the economic reality we're operating in today.

Preserving access to chiropractic care means preserving health, independence, and economic stability for communities across our state.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to the people of Maine.