



Testimony of Jessica Fay for
**The Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Health and Human Services**

January 7, 2026

In Support of LD 1772

**An Act to Support Public Health and Establish the Maine Commission
on Public
Health and Prevention**

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

My name is Jessica Fay and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA 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 our communities.

I am testifying in favor of **LD 1772 - An Act to Support Public Health and Establish the Maine Commission on Public Health and Prevention** with a suggested amendment to the makeup of the Commission. As it should be, there is broad representation on the Commission, including representatives from school-based health programs and of youth engagement, behavioral health and maternal and child health. As currently drafted, this bill does not include representation for older adults specifically. 29% of Maine's entire population is over 60 – see [Maine's Healthy Aging Data Report](https://healthyagingdatareports.org/me/me-healthy-aging-data-report/)¹ and national demographic trends mean that our state and country will continue to age - and live longer. Our systems must begin to address this new longevity. Including someone with expertise in the needs of older Mainers makes sense as a new entity is crafted.

The MCOA has been a long-standing supporter of the Fund for a Healthy Maine (FHM). An important source of funding for the Low-Cost Drugs for the Elderly and Disabled (also known as "DEL"), allows many low-income older Mainers to afford their prescription medications. The FHM-funded public health programs benefit older adults, both directly and indirectly.

The issues that impact the health and well-being of older adults in Maine span legislative committees – MCOA testifies in front of this Committee, Transportation, Housing and Economic Development, Judiciary, and many others. These issues are complex, interconnected and merit

¹ <https://healthyagingdatareports.org/me/me-healthy-aging-data-report/>

expertise from a wide variety of public health experts and community members, who span many policy areas and draw upon personal and professional experience and expertise.

Last year, MCOA launched a specially designed cohort of our Leadership Exchange on Ageism (LEA) for public health leaders. This unique opportunity invited public health professionals from different sectors to explore ageism – by looking at individual, interpersonal, sociocultural and policy influences. Our hope is that this initiative will help advance a broader conversation about an age-positive public health movement in Maine.

MCOA supports this legislation because two of the initiatives – the Commission on Public Health and Prevention and the support of the State Health Plan – fit well into our broader commitment to ending ageism in Maine. Furthermore, having participated in the State Health Plan development process, we know that dedicated funding and support will be instrumental for augmenting planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts in the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments in support of LD 1772.