



THE BINGHAM PROGRAM

Testimony by the Bingham Program in Support of LD 1772: An Act to Support Public Health and Establish the Maine Commission on Public Health and Prevention

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
January 7, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Morgan Hynd, and I am the Director of the Bingham Program, a charitable endowment held at Tufts' Medical Center, established in 1932 to promote health and advance medicine in Maine. I am here to speak in support of LD 1772.

For decades, the Bingham Program has been an active supporter of efforts to strengthen public health in Maine, including financial support that allowed the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) to convene on this matter in 2023. The BRC offered several important recommendations that would allow for sustained investment in disease prevention and health promotion for years to come. Today, you are considering an amended bill that prioritizes the most critical of those recommendations.

If passed, LD 1772 will do three things: establish the Maine Commission on Public Health and Prevention, support the Maine CDC in developing a comprehensive state health plan, and create the Fund for a Healthy Maine Stabilization Account. These three actions are deeply intertwined and ultimately will support the Health and Human Services Committee and the entire Legislature to make informed decisions to improve health in Maine.

The Maine Commission on Public Health and Prevention will be a 13-member group, overseen by the Health and Human Services Committee to advise on the implementation of evidence-based public health policies. This group will add important expertise and capacity and will, in turn, work from the comprehensive state health plan that is also proposed in LD 1772. The Legislature is currently asked to make critical decisions that impact the long-term health outcomes of Maine people without any coordinated guidance. Instead, they make decisions in the silos of their committees without a unifying plan to help guide their decisions. The new Commission on Public Health and Prevention will use the state health plan to fill the gap and provide that much-needed guidance.

The creation of a Fund for a Healthy Maine Stabilization Account is the final thread that ties this legislation together. The Stabilization Account will not only support the Maine Commission on Public Health and Prevention and the development of the State Health Plan, it will also improve

the stability of the Fund for a Healthy Maine by reducing, and eventually eliminating, the need for a working capital advance that Fund for Healthy Maine programs currently rely on. It will also allow critical prevention programs to continue even in the face of financial downturns in the future.

The actions proposed in LD 1772 offer a creative and thoughtful solution to the ongoing challenge of supporting evidence-based public health programs in Maine. This solution will support you in your work and will support better long-term health outcomes for all Maine people. I respectfully request that you vote to pass this common sense legislation.