

York County
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State of Maine | 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services
Testimony of Carter Friend on behalf of York County Community Action
January 27, 2026

In Support Of:
LD 2151, An Act to Improve Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs in Underserved Areas
Sponsored by Senator Reny

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, I am Carter Friend, the CEO of York County Community Action (YCCAC). Nasson Health Care, a department of YCCAC, is one of Maine's 20 Community Health Centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and part of the largest independent primary care network in the state.

York County Community Action is a unique organization in that we are both a Community Action Agency and a Community Health Center. As a Community Action Agency, we implement programs and services to promote economic well-being and social well-being for individuals and families. As a Community Health Center (through Nasson Health Care), we offer integrated, comprehensive health care to support patients' complete health, including primary medical care, behavioral health care and dental care. We provide health care services to about 7,800 patients every year, regardless of their health insurance status or ability to pay.

We strongly support LD 2151 and thank Senator Reny and the cosponsors for reintroducing this critical legislation. It will provide much-needed support for FQHCs to strengthen access to, and expansion of, pharmacy services across Maine. Mainers are facing a critical shortage of access to affordable medications, especially in rural and underserved areas served by FQHCs. FQHCs want to be able to provide pharmacy services and greater access to affordably priced drugs for their patients and the communities they serve, yet existing health center revenues and resources are not sufficient to support development or expansion of current services.

At Nasson, prescription medication plays a central role in the treatment of many of our patients. For example, as a Health Care for the Homeless provider we work to ensure low-barrier access to primary care and other health services to homeless individuals and families. In 2024, we served over 1,500 patients that met the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) definition of homelessness, a number that has increased steadily over the last few years. People who are homeless more frequently experience conditions such as HIV, lung disease (e.g., bronchitis and pneumonia), malnutrition, diabetes, hypertension, and exposure to the cold. They also often experience mental illness and substance use disorder, and they frequently need dental care. Many of these conditions require prescription medications. This grant program will help us serve these and other vulnerable patients in as low-barrier manner as possible, removing geographic and other barriers to access to prescription medication.

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We strongly support LD 2151 and thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at carter.friend@yccac.org if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Carter Friend
CEO
York County Community Action