



Testimony in Support of LD 2123

An Act to Improve Dental Care Access for Children by Modifying the MaineCare Reimbursement Methodology for the Provision of Anesthesia for Certain Dental Services

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Dr. Whitney Wignall, and I am a pediatric dentist practicing in Portland, Maine. I am here today to express my strong support for LD 2123.

As a pediatric dentist, I care for young children, many with extensive dental disease, special health care needs, or severe anxiety. For these patients, comprehensive dental treatment under deep sedation or general anesthesia is often medically necessary to provide care safely and effectively.

Unfortunately, MaineCare's current reimbursement for anesthesia services does not reflect the true cost of care. Strict time limits and low reimbursement rates make it financially unsustainable for many ambulatory surgical centers to provide these services to MaineCare patients. As a result, children face long wait times for necessary treatment, during which dental disease progresses, pain increases, and infections can develop. I see these consequences firsthand in my practice.

LD 2123 addresses this problem in a thoughtful and targeted way. By increasing anesthesia reimbursement rates, removing arbitrary time limits for medically necessary care, and supporting ambulatory surgical centers that serve a high percentage of MaineCare patients, this bill would significantly improve access to timely dental care for children who need it most.

Importantly, this legislation also helps prevent avoidable emergency department visits and reduces long-term health care costs by allowing dental disease to be treated before it becomes more severe.

I strongly support the emergency nature of this bill. Children are waiting now, and delays in care cause real harm. LD 2123 is a practical, child-centered solution that strengthens Maine's dental safety net.

I respectfully urge the Committee to vote "Ought to Pass."

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
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