



Portland Fire Department

Chad Johnston
Fire Chief

February 10, 2025

To: Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

RE: Support for L.D. 2119 – An Act to Expand Reimbursement for Treatment in Place, Community Paramedicine and Alternate Destination Transport

We, as the administrators of the Portland Fire Department, our EMS service MedCU, and our community paramedicine program Mobile Medical Outreach, would like to start by simply echoing the specifics of the testimony of our colleague Dan Svenson highlighting the merits of this bill: sustainable funding mechanisms, improving access for vulnerable populations to engage more fully with the healthcare system, reducing present strain on our emergency departments and our EMS providers, and the fact that these ideas are all being successfully utilized elsewhere in our country presently. Dan sums the depth of the benefits up very well, and we wish to honor the committee's time by not reiterating what is effectively stated elsewhere, but note that we fully support it.

Where we would like to weigh in is from our urban perspective to show the broad, positive impact this bill could have across Maine. We were fortunate enough to collaborate with the champions of this initiative in the greater Waterville area from its early stages through to the present. Their initial drive was communicated to us as related to the closure of the local emergency department, trying to fill the vacuum that would inevitably follow. This closure is inline with a statewide dynamic of consolidation in the healthcare system and the ensuing loss of access to care and services, disproportionately affecting the more rural sections of Maine. Though we are not necessarily experiencing that consolidation dynamic similarly in Portland currently, it is important to note that we find equal value in this bill.

L.D. 2119 presents out of the box opportunities for us to reinforce the broader healthcare system. We are eager to build sustainable pathways to proactive care through community paramedicine. Broadening treatment-in-place at the EMS provider level—through either 911 or community paramedicine systems—offers significant advantages when integrated into the broader healthcare cost structure. By reducing

reliance on the emergency department, these systems provide systemic cost savings while simultaneously making care more accessible and efficient for patients. And finally, transport of patients to alternate dispositions will not only ease the burden on emergency departments and 911 responders but support patients in alternative care environments that may better support longer term care relationships and treatment plans.

It is clear to us that this bill empowering the EMS system to care for people to every extent possible is important, it will benefit all of us from rural to urban, and hope the committee concludes with Ought to Pass on L.D. 2119

Sincerely,



Chad D. Johnston
Chief of Department



Sean Donaghue
Division Chief EMS



Chris Goodall
Assistant Chief

Sean Donaghue
Portland Fire Department
LD 2119

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Chad D. Johnston Sean C. Donaghue Chris Goodall
Chief of Department Division Chief EMS Assistant Chief