



Testimony of Maine Alliance for Care at Home

LD 2212, the Governor's Supplemental Budget

Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations & Financial Affairs and Joint Standing Committee on Health & Human Services

February 17, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services:

My name is Sara Ratcliffe, and I serve as Executive Director of the Maine Alliance for Care at Home. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 2212, the Governor's Supplemental Budget, for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027.

The Maine Alliance for Care at Home is a network of home care, hospice, and personal care providers across our State delivering in-home care to older adults and disabled individuals of all ages, allowing them to stay in their homes and communities.

We respectfully urge the Committees to include two additional priorities in this supplemental budget – funding for **cost of living adjustments (COLAs)** for direct care workers and funding for the **Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) rate determination** implementation (Sections 12, 18, 19, 20, 21, 29, 40, 96, and 102, Clinical, Therapy, Care Coordination, Supportive Skills Building, Assistive Technology and Personal Support Services).

Our members were extremely grateful that the Legislature chose to restore COLAs last year, after the Administration failed to budget for them in the proposed biennial budget. Those actions made a meaningful difference for providers of home care services. At the same time, because the restoration was partial and the underlying cost pressures have continued, the gap between what providers have to pay and what the State reimburses has continued to widen, and this problem will grow without a COLA in the FY27 budget.

In addition to COLAs, reliable rate setting processes are equally important to maintaining service levels in home care. Our members have been engaged with DHHS on a rate determination process for HCBS clinical and other services since June 2024. The last we heard from the department, this process was scheduled to conclude in April 2025, however there is no funding for these rate adjustments in this supplemental budget

proposal. Clinical services in home-based settings, specifically nursing services, are on the brink of collapse without a rate adjustment. In fact, we have already seen [cuts to services due to low reimbursement rates](#) in this service area. If providers have to wait until next year's biennial budget – or longer – for rate adjustments, we are likely to see additional service cuts.

Providers cannot absorb rising wages pressures, healthcare costs, Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML), utilities, insurance, and other program expenses without predictable rate adjustments and COLAs. We urge you to find funding for these crucial priorities in the supplemental budget to help sustain Maine's fragile health care system.