

Subject: Support for LD 2196 – Protecting Rural Health Care at Sacopee Valley Health Center

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Mazie GP Enos, and I am a Family Nurse Practitioner student at USM, resident of Porter, and a nurse at the Sacopee Valley Health Center (SVHC). I am writing to you to urge your support for LD 2196, *“An Act to Lower Health Insurance Costs, Reduce Barriers to Health Care and Ensure Fair Prices for Health Care.”*

In our community, we face unique geographical and financial hurdles. When my patients at SVHC need specialty care – whether it is a nephrologist in Portland or a cardiologist across the border in Conway – the barrier is more than just the 45-minute drive; it is a “paperwork wall.” LD 2196 would streamline prior authorizations for chronic conditions, reducing the hours my colleagues and I spend on redundant approvals. This allows us to focus on patient care and ensures our neighbors don’t have to navigate a complex insurance maze just to stay out of the emergency room.

As a nurse at SVHC and someone who frequently collaborates with our local emergency services, I am particularly grateful for the local leadership of Representative Wadsworth on the Board of Directors for Sacopee Rescue. Our local rescue board knows firsthand that our health infrastructure is a fragile ecosystem. When patients can’t afford specialty care, they end up in the back of an ambulance for preventable crises. By supporting LD 2196, you ensure our neighbors stay healthy and our vital rescue resources are preserved for true emergencies.

The financial reality for our patients is even more staggering. Data from the Office of Affordable Health Care (OAHC) shows that hospital-based prices in Maine often are well above the national median. MaineHealth, the system most frequently accessed by our patients, sits at the 88<sup>th</sup> percentile for costs. A 2025 survey referenced by OAHC found that two out of three families experience financial impacts from medical bills, often struggling to pay for necessities like food, heat, or housing.

In Porter, our patients are often one large bill away from this crisis. By capping hospital prices at 200% of Medicare, LD 2196 ensures that a trip to a specialist doesn’t result in an astronomical bill that forces a family to choose between their health and their home. Furthermore, the bill’s requirement for insurers to pay 110% of Medicare rates for primary and behavioral health is a lifeline for rural clinics like SVHC. This ensures that we can keep our doors open and continue providing local access to the dentistry and mental health care that keep our neighbors healthy.

Nurses at SVHC see this “financial toxicity” every day. We see patients skip life-saving specialty appointments because they cannot afford the bill on top of the travel to get to Portland. LD 2196 is a common-sense step toward transparency and fairness for rural Maine.

I ask for your support of LD 2196 to protect the health and financial well-being of the people of House District 82.

Sincerely,

Mazie GP Enos, BSN, RN  
*FNP Student, University of Southern Maine*  
*RN, Sacopee Valley Health Center*  
*Resident of Porter, ME*