



Stacy Brenner
Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

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Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Stacy Brenner in Support of LD 267, "An Act to Require Private Insurance Coverage for Donor Breast Milk"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
March 23, 2023

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Distinguished Colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Stacy Brenner. I represent Senate District 30, which includes all of Gorham and most of Scarborough. I am here to speak in favor of LD 267, "An Act to Require Private Insurance Coverage for Donor Breast Milk."

I want to start by saying breast milk is the gold standard. Formula is made to resemble breast milk but we will never synthetically manufacture something as perfect for a human as human milk.

This proposed legislation would ensure that private health insurance companies provide coverage for donor breast milk in cases when infants have a medical need and when parents are unable to produce enough breast milk. This bill proposes to restrict carriers from imposing any deductible, copayment, coinsurance or other cost-sharing requirements for the cost of donor breast milk.

The 130th Legislature passed LD 85, "An Act Concerning MaineCare Coverage for Donor Breast Milk" in the Health and Human Services Committee, which extended coverage for donor breast milk to our MaineCare babies. Individuals on TRICARE, the insurance program for uniformed service members and their families, are already covered by the federal government. This bill will close the loop by adding Maine's privately insured population to the list of covered parties.

This issue, brought to me by my nurse-manager at the Birthplace at Northern Lights Mercy Hospital, completes the circle on who is eligible for coverage for the costs of donor breast milk. Making a health care decision relative to cost at the time of birth for an infant born in need of additional support adds a level of complexity to a time already fraught with uncertainty.

When infants are ill and/or premature, breast milk is especially important to their recovery and growth. However, parents are not always able to provide enough of their own breast milk to nurture the infant. In these cases, donor breast milk is necessary in providing sufficient medical care for infants, to ensure their livelihood and optimal growth. This provides a level of equity when the cost of donor breast milk presents a financial barrier for a young family. Requiring private insurance companies to provide coverage for donor breast milk, similar to how MaineCare covers donor breast milk, offers the best opportunity for a healthy start and optimal nourishment for a compromised infant.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.