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Maine Coast Hospital  
Mayo Hospital  
Mercy Hospital  
Northern Light Health Foundation  
Northern Light Laboratory  
Northern Light Pharmacy  
Sebasticook Valley Hospital

## **LD 199 An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program**

### **Testimony in Support March 28, 2023**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN. I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations speaking in support of this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with over 12,000 employees statewide.

The bill before you today provides MaineCare coverage for non-citizen residents of Maine who are 21 years of age or older with qualifying low incomes but are not eligible for MaineCare coverage due to their immigration status. We are in support of this important legislation.

For Northern Light Health the largest volume of non-citizen residents are cared for by Northern Light Mercy Hospital. Over time we have observed that these patients present with a number of chronic diseases in need of acute management and ongoing care. Understandably these individuals have delayed care as they left their country of origin to immigrate to the United States ultimately relocating to the State of Maine. Many access our services due to an emergent health care event resulting in an emergency room or urgent care clinical encounter. Diagnoses include (but are not limited to) acute cardiac events, stroke, complications of cancer, diabetes, kidney failure and pulmonary disorders. Care for the patients is transitioned to a Mercy Hospital outpatient setting, services are provided through our charity care programs. Given the delay in preventative care a high volume of services are often needed to restore and maintain health status. Examples include physical therapy and occupational therapy for stroke rehabilitation, outpatient oncology care, cardiac rehabilitation, diabetes management and more.

Individuals in need of community-based facility care experience the most significant challenges. Older non-citizens in need of nursing facility care simply have no charity care option for their services. These individuals experience extended hospitalizations as

care managers explore every possible option to resolve the financial barriers to discharge into a community-based facility.

Our health care teams are honored to care for all of the people of Maine. We ask that you support this important legislation to provide eligible non-citizen residents with MaineCare resources to support the cost of care.

Thank you.