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Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 199 An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program

March 28, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, members of the Committee On Health and Human Services, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of the Maine Community Action Partnership, and we support LD 199 An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program.

We can debate whether or not one believes health care is a right or a privilege, but regardless of the answer, it cannot be both and it cannot be just for some. All Mainers who meet income guidelines are eligible for MaineCare, whether they choose to enroll or not. Immigrants to Maine deserve the same right or privilege.

We know that individual and family health is the result of many things, not only health care, but health care is certainly an important part of it. It is important especially for those who have joined us in Maine seeking asylum from war torn, economically devastated countries after a long and harrowing journey.

Young children and adults come to us undernourished, traumatized and needing the care MaineCare will provide, in addition to other community supports. Providing that care for children, as we are, is so important and I thank you for that change. But children have parents or other adults in their lives, and families thrive when children and adults thrive together. Traumatized adults cannot be the best parents and partners they can be unless and until they have help.

Adults with chronic illness need regular care so they can, eventually, go to work or school; they need medicine and therapy and all the things most other Mainers need and have the opportunity to get.

This step is an important one, it shows who we are and what we believe. The State was doing this for many years and nothing terrible happened as a result; in fact, the opposite. People were cared for, they got the medical attention they needed and they are an integral part of our communities today.

LD 199 will undo a bad decision based on bad assumptions. I hope that most of us really do assume the best in people, and we care about our communities and the individuals and families in them. Supporting this bill is the way we show what we value most.

Thank you for your time and attention, I am happy to answer any questions that I can.

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