



Cape Integrative Health

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Wednesday, April 19, 2023

To: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: Testimony on LD 592

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you chairs and members of the HHS committee. My name is Dr. Zev Myerowitz. I reside in Cape Elizabeth and am a lifelong resident of the State of Maine. I am a third-generation healthcare provider in my thirteenth year of practice. I am the current president of the Maine Chiropractic Association and will be testifying in support of LD 592.

This bill on the surface has two goals: The first goal is equal coverage for equal service. Mainecare coverage of chiropractic is based upon Medicare, which has not been updated since President Nixon signed public law 92-603 in 1972 including chiropractic adjustments of the spine only. Doctors of Chiropractic are recognized by the Department of Education and the Department of Transportation as first professional doctorates, are recognized federally and locally as competent in the evaluation and diagnosis of disease, as well as licensed to treating a wide variety of conditions. This is accepted in all commercial health insurance. Over the past decade our efforts have slightly modernized Mainecare as to now cover patient examinations and spinal X-rays, with federal covering the same percentage of these services as those covered within Medicare. The remaining *entirety* of a chiropractor's scope outside the spine is not covered, despite those services being covered when performed by another provider.

At Cape Integrative Health, the office of which I am director, we see over thirty thousand office visits annually. A Mainecare patient can see either a chiropractor or one of our primary care providers for diagnosis and imaging of a spinal condition.

Unlike *every commercial health insurance in the state*, however, chiropractic exams for conditions including extremities are not covered by Mainecare. If the patient has a tennis elbow both the chiropractor and the physical therapist have training in treating this condition, but only the physical therapist is covered by Mainecare when treating.

The second goal of this bill is to remove the financial barrier for Mainecare patients to

have access to a low cost evidenced based form of treatment for chronic pain to avoid reliance on opioids.

Maine declared war on opioids in 2019. The last three years have set records with total OD's and deaths with just over **500** deaths in 2020, 632 in 2021 and **716** last year according to Maine CDC.

We are losing this war.

According to the NIH, a legal prescription of an opioid is recognized as one of the top three gateways to addiction. In Maine alone over 10,000 overdoses resulted in over 700 deaths just in 2022. Governor Mills has committed over \$7 million a year in non Mainecare opioid-response and continues to engage in how to invest nearly \$200 million coming from pharmaceutical legal settlements. The fiscal note attached to this bill is a literal drop in the bucket, and according to Gordon Smith, the Opioid Response Director of Maine, the cost of patient being admitted to the emergency department for opioid addiction is approximately \$500,000. The bill will pay for itself.

Missouri, with a Medicaid population twice that of Maine, had an independent cost analysis for this exact bill performed, and found a cost savings of \$8-10 million when simply allowing chiropractors to do their job.

I am including patient testimony of her son's addiction to opioids following a legal prescription. Unlike any other specialty he had a favorable response to chiropractic care for his pain, but is unable to pay for it.

I ask that you support LD 592.

Sincerely,

Zev Myerowitz Jr. D.C., Dipl. Ac. (IACA), cSSH, DABCA., ART, M.S., LAc., Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), CSCS

MCA President

Director: Health Services

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