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Testimony of Trevor Putnoky

to the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

In Opposition to

LD 1220, An Act to Require Lyme Disease Vaccine Coverage for State-regulated Health Plans

May 8, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

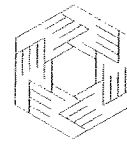
My name is Trevor Putnoky and I'm the Director of Membership and Communications at the Healthcare Purchaser Alliance of Maine. The HPA is a nonprofit that represents the purchasers of healthcare in Maine. Our mission is to advance healthcare value and to support and incentivize high-quality, affordable care. We have over 60 members, including some of the largest public and private employers and health trusts in Maine. Collectively, our members spend over a billion dollars annually providing health care for nearly one quarter of the commercially insured population in the state.

I'm here today to testify in opposition to LD 1220, as we believe it is premature to create a Lyme disease vaccine mandate. While there are many promising vaccine candidates in the pipeline, including options from Moderna and Pfizer, none has applied for Food and Drug Administration approval. An analysis of the vaccine pipeline released last month predicted that Pfizer's vaccine is likely to be the first to reach the market,¹ but the company has said it is aiming to potentially apply for FDA authorization in 2025.²

Until one or more of these vaccines goes through the FDA approval process, we will be missing important information about any vaccine's potential efficacy, side effects, cost, and target population—all of which will be critical data for the committee to have as it evaluates whether to mandate coverage, and what a mandated coverage program would look like. Such information will also be necessary for a meaningful Bureau of Insurance mandate review.

¹ GlobalData Healthcare, "Moderna announces development of new treatments for Lyme disease," *Clinical Trials Arena*, April 21, 2023. Available at: <https://www.clinicaltrialsarena.com/comment/moderna-treatments-lyme-disease/>.

² Pfizer, "Pfizer and Valneva Issue Update on Phase 3 Clinical Trial Evaluating Lyme Disease Vaccine Candidate VLA15," February 17, 2023. Available at: <https://www.pfizer.com/news/announcements/pfizer-and-valneva-issue-update-phase-3-clinical-trial-evaluating-lyme-disease>.



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We share the sponsor's hope that a safe and effective vaccine will soon be available to protect people from Lyme disease, particularly in Maine, which has the highest incidence of Lyme disease in the country.³ But until a vaccine is actually available, we believe it is premature to consider mandated coverage, and therefore urge the committee to vote ought not to pass on LD 1220.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide HPA's feedback. I'd be happy to answer any questions and will be available for the work session.

³ "Incidence rates of Lyme disease in the U.S. in 2020, by state," *statista*, October 2022. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/742936/incidence-rates-of-lyme-disease-cases-by-state/>.