



LEUKEMIA &
LYMPHOMA
SOCIETY

January 17, 2024

Joint Health and Human Services Committee
Cross Building, Room 209
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Co-Chairs Baldacci and Meyer, and Health and Human Services committee members,

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is pleased to submit the following testimony to the Joint Health and Human Services Committee **in favor of LD 1955, “An act to require hospitals and hospital-affiliated providers to provide financial assistance for medical care.”** and respectfully ask that the committee vote **ought to pass**.

At LLS, our mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin’s disease, and myeloma and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS exists to find cures, ensure access to treatments, and improve survivorship for blood cancer patients.

LLS is working individually and with other patient advocacy groups on medical debt legislation nationwide, specifically in neighboring states (NY, RI, VT, MA). LLS released a poll last October that over 90% of U.S. adults agree that elected officials should pass policies that protect people with serious illnesses like cancer from medical debt and harassment from collection agencies. LD 1955 has taken many great strides to do that.

LD 1955 increases eligibility for free care from 150% FPL (\$21,870) to 200% FPL (\$29,160). Hospitals must widely and accessibly publicize their free care program and application. It removes unnecessary application questions or requirements (i.e., requiring someone to list assets) and notarization requirements.

The bill also prohibits certain collections actions for at least 240 days after a patient receives a bill. This allows patients more time to apply and gives hospitals more time to determine if patients are eligible for free care. The bill prohibits other billing or collections actions until the hospital fully determines a patient's eligibility for free care. It also requires hospitals to offer patients payment plan options with terms of at least two years, with monthly payments to be at most 3% of the patient's monthly income. Compliance with federal price transparency laws is important to giving Mainers the information they need to make life-changing financial decisions.

We urge the members of the Committee to vote **to ought to pass LD1955**. This legislation increases access to care, reasonable time to pay medical debt, protects Mainers from predatory collection practices, and ensures compliance with existing federal law.

Sincerely,
Ernie Davis
Director, Northeast State Government Affairs
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