



Improving the health status of Maine's seasonal workers and their families by providing culturally appropriate care and services.

**State of Maine | 131st Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services
Testimony of Hannah Miller on behalf of Maine Mobile Health Program
February 29, 2024**

Supporting:

**LD 2175, "An Act to Improve Access to
Affordable Prescription Drugs in Underserved Areas"**

Sponsored by President Jackson

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Hannah Miller and I am the Director of Outreach at Maine Mobile Health Program (MMHP). We are a federally qualified health center (FQHC) with a specialty focus on Maine's farmworkers, seafood processors, and their families. We offer medical, behavioral health, and nursing care statewide through our mobile units, referrals to dental, vision, and specialty care, pharmacy assistance, and care coordination. I am joining others here today to emphasize that improving and expanding pharmacy access must be a priority for Maine.

Maine Mobile Health Program is part of the network of community health centers that operate in rural and under-resourced communities in Maine. Community health centers are designed to support whole communities, welcoming patients from a variety of backgrounds and helping them achieve their health goals. We specialize in supporting people living in the hidden, often forgotten corners of our state. We serve as central points of access for both healthcare and referrals to address basic needs. We are providers of trust.

LD 2175 would establish a grant program to provide support for FQHCs to develop or expand their capacity to provide affordable pharmacy services directly to their patients. Investing in pharmacy services through FQHCs is efficient and effective because they are already established in our communities, working diligently to support the health of all people in Maine.



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At MMHP we use the community health worker model to support patients throughout their healthcare journey. They focus on the before and after parts of appointments to make sure patients can follow through on their health needs and goals. As a CHW, I worked with a patient from Washington county who regularly needed support accessing insulin. He worked in the blueberry fields and could not leave work early enough to reach the pharmacy while it was still open. The closest pharmacy closed at 5:00pm and others were at least an hour away. We would meet at the dollar store in the evening every few weeks to make sure he could continue taking this essential medication.

Another part of MMHP's model includes offering mobile health services directly in the community. We stock a selection of prescriptions on the mobile medical units to reduce the need for patients and staff to go to the pharmacy the next day. Last summer during the broccoli harvest in Aroostook county our team strategized about how to use our in-house pharmacy services to purchase and deliver three months' worth of essential medications to several patients who otherwise could not afford them. This bill would allow us to improve our pharmacy program, including increasing the types of medications we can offer directly on the mobile units and expanding our availability.

We strongly support LD 2175 and thank President Jackson and the cosponsors for bringing legislation forward that will provide much needed support for FQHCs to improve access and expand pharmacy services in Maine.

On behalf of Maine Mobile Health Program, thank you for considering our comments. Please feel welcome to contact me directly with any follow-up questions.

Sincerely,
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