



**Testimony of Julia MacDonald, Government Relations Director,
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**

Testimony in Support of L.D. 209, "An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30; 2025"

January 23, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Senator Ingwersen, Rep. Meyer and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee, My name is Julia MacDonald, and I am the Government Relations Director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) in Maine. ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. As the nation's leading advocate for public policies that are helping to defeat cancer, ACS CAN ensures that cancer patients, survivors, and their families have a voice in public policy matters at all levels of government.

ACS CAN appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony that supports closing the funding gap and strengthening MaineCare. On January 3, 2019, Governor Janet Mills signed her first executive order to implement the voter-approved expansion of MaineCare. This expansion has had a transformative impact on access to health care in our state. For example, between 2019 and 2021, the share of uninsured Mainers decreased from 8% to 5.7%, marking the largest improvement in health insurance coverage of any state during this period. This milestone underscores the significance of MaineCare in ensuring affordable, comprehensive, and quality health care for Mainers who need it most.

Medicaid, including MaineCare, serves as the primary health insurance program for low-income Americans, providing coverage to nearly 65 million people nationwide. This includes individuals with cancer, those at risk of a cancer diagnosis, and cancer survivors. By enabling access to regular check-ups, early disease detection, necessary medications, and emergency care, MaineCare improves health outcomes and supports the resilience of individuals and families. It ensures that patients can receive the care they need when they need it most, reducing the financial and emotional burdens often associated with serious illnesses like cancer.



In addition to its direct health benefits, MaineCare strengthens the broader community and economic fabric of our state. By keeping hospital doors open—particularly in rural areas—MaineCare provides access to lifesaving care, supports job creation, and sustains local economies. Hospitals, schools, and other community institutions rely on MaineCare funding to meet the health needs of their populations. Closing the funding gap will ensure these institutions can continue to effectively serve their communities.

For too many Mainers, the cost of health care remains a significant barrier. Low- and minimum-wage workers, many of whom do not receive health insurance through their employers, often struggle to afford private coverage. Without access to MaineCare, these individuals may delay or forego necessary care, exacerbating health issues and increasing long-term costs for the health care system. By fully funding MaineCare, we can break down these barriers, creating healthier families, healthier communities, and a stronger Maine.

The supplemental budget proposal to address the funding gap in MaineCare is an investment in the health and prosperity of our state. It ensures that more Mainers have access to the care they need to stay healthy, contribute to their communities, and support their families. It is also an investment in equity, ensuring that everyone, regardless of income, can access affordable health care.

I urge you to support the supplemental budget proposal and take this crucial step toward a healthier, more equitable Maine. Thank you for your time and consideration.