



**Maine Medical
Association**



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
AND
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION**

In Support Of

LD. 178 An Act Regarding Coverage For Step Therapy For Advanced Metastatic Cancer

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Room 220, Cross Building, Augusta, Maine
Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services. My name is Austin Vaughan, and I am a medical student at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. I am submitting this testimony in support of LD. 178 An Act Regarding Coverage For Step Therapy For Advanced Metastatic Cancer, on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and the Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

The MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice. We have all determined that testifying in support of LD 178 is important for several reasons.

MMA and MOA believe that our current U.S. healthcare system produces some of the world's most eminent clinicians and healthcare facilities, which provide some of the most advanced medical care in the world. But, despite sustained efforts by physicians and other healthcare workers, our system fails patients and physicians in multiple ways. Maine

Medical Association's Statement of Healthcare Reform¹ details those ways, including the fact that physicians are burdened with documentation that is increasingly geared toward system requirements rather than patient care.

Metastatic cancer occurs when cancer cells spread from the primary tumor to other parts of the body. Metastases can be unpredictable and respond to treatments in completely different ways – they can also cause varying and debilitating symptoms. Insurance companies refusing coverage until a patient first fails to respond to other cheaper methods could significantly impact their quality of life and long-term outcomes by delaying more effective treatment.

If a Doctor feels that a certain medication is the best treatment for their patient with metastatic cancer and the side effects of that cancer, and that patient agrees, then it should be covered without the potentially dangerous step of requiring another medication first. We will continue to advocate for reform on step therapy and appreciate the addition from the work of LD 1009 from the 129th Legislature.

Of note, we would like to ask Representative Mathieson to consider removing the words “advanced” from this document. Metastatic cancer is defined as cancer that has spread from its primary site to a secondary site, where as advanced cancer normally refers to cancer where a cure or long-term remission is incredibly unlikely.² We think this freedom of choice for patients affected by cancer should be extended to all those with metastatic disease.

Reforming step therapy has the potential to shift care in Maine to be more patient-centered. This bill would help to reduce potential suffering by giving patients effective treatment for their specific symptoms earlier and increase positive outcomes by allowing for conversations around treatment to only consider benefits and risks rather than factoring in cost or lack of coverage. For these reasons, we support LD 178.

Thank you for considering the thoughts of Maine's physicians, and we hope you support LD 178.

Thank you,

Austin Vaughan

¹https://mainephysicians.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/statement_hcr_mma_board_adopted_6_7_23_FINAL.pdf.

²American Cancer Society. Understanding Advanced and Metastatic Cancer. [www.cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/advanced-cancer/what-is.html). Published September 10, 2020. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/advanced-cancer/what-is.html>