

State of Maine | 132nd Legislature  
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Testimony of Caroline Zimmerman on behalf of the Maine Immunization Coalition  
February 5, 2025

Support:

**LD 93, "An Act to Reduce Cost and Increase Access to Disease Prevention by Expanding the Universal Childhood Immunization Program to Include Adults"**  
Sponsored by Representative Zager

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Caroline Zimmerman, Chair of the Maine Immunization Coalition (MIC). The MIC is a network of associations, health care systems, and providers working to protect Maine people across their lifespan against vaccine-preventable diseases, by increasing immunization rates through information sharing and collaboration. Our coalition includes: Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, MaineHealth, Maine Primary Care Association, Northern Light Health, Maine Families for Vaccines, Maine Community Action Partnership, Maine Medical Association, Maine Public Health Association and Maine Osteopathic Association.

MIC stands in support of LD 93, which seeks to incorporate adults into our current statewide Universal Immunization Program. The bill proposes to build off of the existing structure of the Universal Childhood Immunization Program, overseen by the Maine Vaccine Board (MVB). In terms of the current language and design, we support the voluntary nature of the program and its offering, allowing health care and community vaccination sites the ability to determine what works best for them.

First, this bill builds off of a strong foundation set by the current Universal Childhood Immunization Program. For the past 14 years, Maine children and families have been able to access vaccine through this program statewide.

- According to the most recent MVB Annual Report, the program has saved, "an average of approximately \$5.5 million per year for our businesses and insurers"<sup>1</sup>
- Our current Universal Childhood Immunization Program supports access to vaccines. As of August 2024, 95 percent of school-age children had received all required immunizations.
- Administratively, the Maine Vaccine Board is well established, so we would not need to develop a new committee or oversight board for the inclusion of adults into this program.

Second, as a Coalition of health care and public health professionals, the opportunity for cost savings and increasing access to vaccines in our communities is important to us.

- For clinical locations that struggle to offer adult vaccines due to the expense, a universal purchase program could enable them to offer vaccines at a more manageable cost. According to an initial analysis from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, through bulk purchasing of adult vaccines at federally discounted rates, an adult immunization program has the potential in Maine to save payers an estimated 27% versus paying full market price.
- For patients, this program may increase access to vaccines at a variety of locations and thus improve immunization coverage for a variety of vaccine-preventable diseases.
- In terms of surveillance, another benefit of a Universal purchase program that includes adults,

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<sup>1</sup> Maine Vaccine Board, Annual Report 2024.

[https://mevaccine.org/data/get\\_doc/ad9983979bcb3b466859bce4d4e13d23](https://mevaccine.org/data/get_doc/ad9983979bcb3b466859bce4d4e13d23)

would be improved statewide monitoring of adult vaccination rates and gaps. This would enable us to better tailor outreach strategies for vaccination, as well as predict where we may see higher burdens of illness.

- As for payment, we encourage the Department and MVB to pursue participation by federal insurers when possible.

Lastly, the Department is able to learn from others in designing a program for Maine. Vermont, Alaska and Rhode Island have well-established programs, and have shown benefits to communities and consumers.

Through leveraging our current infrastructure and oversight capacity, in addition to learning from what other states have done, we believe that the Department can design an adult immunization program that works best for Maine.

On behalf of the Maine Immunization Coalition, we urge you to support LD 93. Thank you for considering our comments, and please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [caroline.zimmerman@mainehealth.org](mailto:caroline.zimmerman@mainehealth.org) with any follow up questions.

Caroline Zimmerman, Chair  
Maine Immunization Coalition