

March 8, 2025

To: Committee on Health and Human Services
From: Ellen Farnsworth, MSN, MEd. APRN, NP-C

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Michele Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services committee

RE: LD 143 An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services

My name is Ellen Farnsworth from Portland; a recently retired Nurse Practitioner, past President Maine Nurse Practitioner Association (MNPA), mother and grandmother. I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 143 to maintain family planning services to provide access to these vital health care services in Maine.

During my over 25 years of practice in primary care and substance use treatment I have relied on the quality expert care for specialty contraception such as IUD's and implants that I was unable to provide, referred my women with positive pap smears for biopsy and follow-up care, and comprehensive sexually transmitted illness care. Their services were always comprehensive, welcoming, and of the utmost quality especially to those women who were underserved. Family planning centers in Maine served over 31,000 clients in 2023 who already faced barriers to care either without insurance or fortunate enough to have Medicaid. For women undergoing treatment for substance use disorder it was imperative to prevent pregnancy or if already pregnant to prevent pregnancy postpartum.

The health care provider shortage in Maine has been well documented. Family Planning Association and Planned Parenthood through their specialized clinics have provided quality family planning services, primary care services, behavioral health services and quality public health services and education. Now through a grant and fundraising these essential services are now available to the far reaches of Maine through a staffed and equipped mobile van. Since the reversal of Roe vs Wade and subsequent diminished federal funding, this valuable health care resource needs to be funded to meet the needs of the people of Maine. Their sliding scale fee for service, acceptance of Medicaid insurance and mobile van allows women access to needed family planning services, primary and behavioral health care. This bill does not fund termination of pregnancy services.

I, as a Nurse Practitioner, mother, grandmother, member MNPA Legislative Committee, urge you to vote ought to pass LD 143 to fund and maintain access to family planning services. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out to me @ 207-671-4180.

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