



**Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth
In Support of LD 518, “Resolve, Increasing Access to Maternal and Child
Health Care”
March 12, 2025**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Sarah Calder, Senior Government Affairs Director at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in support of LD 518, “Resolve, Increasing Access to Maternal and Child Health Care.”

MaineHealth is an integrated non-profit health care system that provides a continuum of health care services to communities throughout Maine and New Hampshire. Every day, our over 24,000 care team members support our vision of “Working Together so Our Communities are the Healthiest in America” by providing a range of services from primary and specialty physician services to a continuum of behavioral health care services, community and tertiary hospital care, home health care and a lab.

CradleME public health nurses provides critical support and education for parents and their infants, including offering breastfeeding support and newborn weight checks. Unfortunately, it is our understanding that there are now only 3 CradleME public health nurses for both York and Cumberland Counties, following a recent reduction in upwards of 4 public health nurses in the Portland area. This represents a significant loss for prenatal and postpartum women and their newborns and infants.

As just one example, our team referred a patient for public health nursing on January 29 and on February 18 she had yet to be assigned to a nurse. After follow-up by our team, the patient was finally assigned a nurse on February 25, nearly a month later. This is a significant delay in comparison to the previous 48-hour turnaround time.

In addition to ensuring that there is adequate capacity across the state, we believe that LD 518 provides an opportunity to look at other barriers to referral, including, as one example, that referrals are still required to be faxed.

CradleME public health nurses provide important preventative health interventions, and we support the legislation before you today as a means to address the current gaps in the system that are delaying access to this critically important service.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.