



# Maine People's Alliance

Dear Members of the Committee of Health and Human Services,

My name is Mohamed Ibrahim, I live in Lewiston, and I'm a Community Organizer at Maine People's Alliance. I am here today to express my strong opposition to the proposed bill LD 429 that requires hospitals to collect information regarding patients' immigration status. While the intention of ensuring proper reporting and reimbursement for medical services is acknowledged, this bill poses significant dangers to our most vulnerable communities, particularly asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers are individuals who have fled their home countries due to persecution and are seeking safety and security in the United States. They are often in desperate need of medical care after enduring traumatic experiences. However, by requiring hospitals to collect immigration status information, we risk deterring these individuals from seeking essential medical treatment. Fear of being questioned about their immigration status may prevent asylum seekers from accessing the care they need, ultimately jeopardizing their health and well-being.

Moreover, while the bill states that patients are not required to provide their immigration status, the mere presence of this requirement creates an environment of fear and distrust. Asylum seekers may be concerned that disclosing any information, even if voluntary, could lead to negative repercussions for themselves and their families. This can lead to delayed or avoided medical care, exacerbating health problems and placing additional strain on our healthcare system.

Additionally, this bill could violate the fundamental principle of patient confidentiality. Healthcare should be a safe space where individuals can seek help without fear of scrutiny or judgment based on their immigration status. By mandating the collection of immigration data, we risk breaching this trust and creating barriers to care that harm not only asylum seekers but also the healthcare providers who are committed to serving all members of our community.

Furthermore, the financial implications of this bill are concerning. The requirement for hospitals to report the aggregate costs of care provided to asylum seekers may lead to stigmatization and further marginalization of these individuals. Should this information be used to justify cuts in public health funding or services for asylum seekers, we are dooming vulnerable individuals who are already at risk to further isolation and inadequate healthcare access.

In conclusion, I urge all committee members to reconsider the implications of this bill. Instead of creating barriers to care for asylum seekers, we should focus on fostering an inclusive healthcare system that prioritizes the health and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their immigration status. Let us work together to ensure that everyone in Maine has access to the care they need and deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Ibrahim  
Community Organizer