



Meg Garratt-Reed, Executive Director
Office of Affordable Health Care

April 9th, 2025

Senator Henry Ingwersen

Representative Michele Meyer

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Cross Building, Room 209

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services;

I am Meg Garratt-Reed, Executive Director of the Office of Affordable Health Care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. While the Office appreciates the intent of this bill to make health coverage more affordable for Maine people, and agrees that full modeling would be needed to understand the feasibility of a Medicaid Forward plan in Maine, we do not believe that there is a realistic path forward for such a policy at this time, and would therefore request that the committee vote ought not to pass on this legislation.

As you are all aware, Congress is currently contemplating changes to federal financing and administration of the Medicaid program. Those changes, if passed, could have major impacts on existing MaineCare eligibility and benefits, as well as the fiscal impact of the program at the state level. An expansion of MaineCare like the one contemplated in this bill would require both collaboration with the federal Administration, and confidence in the stability of federal Medicaid policy and financing. Given current circumstances, we do not feel that the effort and expense of conducting a full modeling of such a proposal would be justified, given concerns about the feasibility of implementing such a program at this time.

The Office also has concerns about the timeline outlined in the legislation. In New Mexico, where this policy concept was initially developed, a report modeling the policy was finalized 18 months after the passage of legislation requiring the study, and that report built on prior in-depth collaborative work between advocates and state government agencies. Such a study in Maine would require a procurement process for a qualified vendor to perform the analysis, contract negotiations, and a significant timeline to perform the work. Based on those factors, the Office could not commit to delivering the report to the legislature any earlier than late 2026.

Finally, I would like to highlight that the Office of Affordable Health Care has recently produced two reports on related topics in response to legislative directives passed through the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee. In 2024, the Office produced "A Public

Option for Maine: Considerations for Policymakers” and this year released a report quantifying the enrollment and cost of several models for expanded MaineCare eligibility for adults. Both reports provide a sense of impacts and costs of public coverage models, along with feasibility considerations, and are available under the “reports” section of the Office’s website at www.maine.gov/oahc.

While we appreciate the interest in exploring models to broaden affordable coverage, in light of the considerations above we would respectfully request that members vote ought not to pass on this legislation, to allow the Office to continue to focus on our statutory analytics duties and on policy development within the domains jointly identified with our Advisory Council. More information about the Office’s recent and future work can be found in our 2024 Annual Report.

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have before the work session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meg Garratt-Reed". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Meg Garratt-Reed, Executive Director
Office of Affordable Health Care