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Testimony in support:
LD 1447, "Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Expedite
Reimbursement of All Vendors"
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
April 14th, 2025

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Laura Harper, I live in Hallowell and I'm a Senior Associate at Moose Ridge Associates. I'm here today to provide testimony on behalf of my client, Maine Family Planning, in support of LD 1447, "Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Expedite Reimbursement of All Vendors."

Maine Family Planning provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care to teens and adults at 19 locations statewide. Our mission is to ensure that all people have access to high-quality, culturally relevant and affordable sexual and reproductive health care services, comprehensive sexual health education, and the right to control their sexual and reproductive lives.

In addition to the sexual and reproductive health services you would assume MFP provides, we offer expanded services for pregnant women, new moms, and their families in Hancock and Washington counties. We are the WIC provider for Downeast Maine with offices in Calais, Ellsworth and Machias. As you know, WIC works to maintain the health of women, infants and children up to age five by providing information on eating well and vouchers for healthy foods.

In Hancock county we also operate Maine Families which provides in-home parenting information while developing caring, supportive relationships with parents. Our Maine Families program provides resources for families around pregnancy, nutrition, baby and child health care, breastfeeding/formula feeding, immunizations, child growth and development, discipline, toilet training, and child and household safety. We also operate a monthly play group in Ellsworth for families in the program with children up to three years old.

Both our WIC and Maine Families offices are reporting that many of the families served are struggling to find providers who take MaineCare because of the slow and low reimbursement rates. In these rural counties where there is already a shortage of healthcare clinicians, delays in reimbursements for MaineCare services exacerbates deferred prevention, treatment and care in a population already strained by low-wages, transportation challenges, and other socio-economic barriers. Indeed, 47% of MFP patients in 2024 were covered by some type of MaineCare, either full or the limited family planning benefit. Timely payments to MaineCare providers are crucial for us at MFP and the families we serve.

For these reasons, Maine Family Planning urges you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1447. Thank you for your time today and I'm happy to try and answer any questions.