



**Maine Medical
Association**



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
AND
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION**

In Support Of

**LD 1523 - An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to Doula Services;
and LD 376 An Act to Improve Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes Through Doula Care**

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Room 209, Cross Building, Augusta, Maine
Thursday, April 17, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Anne Sedlack, and I am the Director of Advocacy for the Maine Medical Association. I am here on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and Maine Osteopathic Association, testifying in support of LD 1523 - An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to Doula Services; and LD 376 An Act to Improve Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes Through Doula Care on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing over 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

The MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice. We have all determined we should testify in support of LD 376 and LD 1523.

We strongly support the intent of this bill to improve maternal and infant outcomes by increasing access to doula care. There is compelling evidence that doulas can play a critical role in supporting pregnant individuals. This is especially true given the growing evidence that "continuous labor support confers measurable clinical benefits to both mother and

baby."¹ Despite evidence of the effectiveness of Doulas, they're frequently underused, often because of a lack of access and affordability. Enabling these services to be reimbursed through MaineCare is a critical step toward improving equality and efficiency in maternal health care.

While we support both of these bills, we believe that LD 1523 is the appropriate vehicle for this policy given the guardrails that it includes. We appreciate the creation of an advisory committee to provide advice and make recommendations to the department regarding doula services.

We encourage this proposed advisory committee to create a system that ensures MaineCare eligibility for doulas based on their ability to meet clearly defined and culturally informed core competencies. A standardized approach rooted in essential knowledge, skills, and abilities, rather than one that might rely solely on formal certification, can help maintain a high standard of care while allowing more doulas, especially those serving marginalized communities, to participate in the system.

Thank you for considering the thoughts of Maine's physicians, and we hope you support these bills.

Thank you,

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¹Kozhimannil KB, Attanasio LB, Jou J, Joarnt LK, Johnson PJ, Gjerdingen DK. Potential benefits of increased access to doula support during childbirth. Am J Manag Care. 2014;20(8):e340-e352. Published 2014 Aug 1.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5538578/>