



**State of Maine | 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Testimony of Hannah Hudson on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
April 22, 2025**

Supporting:

LD 1497, "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Primary Care Reporting by the Maine Quality Forum and to Establish the Primary Care Advisory Council"
Sponsored by Representative Samuel Zager

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Hannah Hudson, Director of Policy at Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA).

MPCA is a membership organization that represents Maine's Community Health Centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Maine's FQHCs make up the largest independent primary care network in the state, providing high quality and accessible primary and preventive medical, behavioral, and dental health services for over 200,000 people (1 in 6 Mainers) at more than 100 service delivery sites in all 16 Maine counties.

Primary care is the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community. Absent access to high-quality primary care, minor health problems can spiral into life-altering chronic disease; chronic disease management becomes difficult and uncoordinated, visits to emergency departments increase, and preventive care lags. Put simply, robust and accessible primary care is crucial to a functional, effective, and efficient healthcare system.

In 2019, pursuant to a new public law, the Maine Quality Forum (MQF) began to track and report on the percentage of healthcare dollars spent on primary care services. Over the years, MQF has refined its definition of primary care, generally falling around the 10% mark. But what does that mean for Mainers? I would contend it means little in the known absence of standardized definitions and approaches across states. We can, however, take the next logical step and explore what we are getting from that 10% of healthcare spend when it comes to quality and accessibility.

LD 1497 directs MQF to support Maine in that logical next step to better understand what we are getting from our current primary care system through examination of performance measures related to quality, cost, access, and outcomes. Coupled with a purposefully constructed advisory council to assist in the interpretation of data and identification of actionable recommendations, the path forward for high-quality accessible primary care in Maine will be data-driven, expertly informed, and actionable.

MPCA also greatly appreciates the inclusion of a provider from a FQHC in the composition of the advisory council. Maine's FQHC's are leaders in innovative approaches to primary care delivery and are a critical voice to include in this process. We respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 1497. On behalf of Maine's FQHCs, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at hudson@mepca.org with any follow-up questions.

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