

State of Maine | 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
Testimony of Hannah A. Hudson on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
April 23, 2025

Supporting:
LD 1451 "An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community Transportation"
Sponsored by Senator Tipping

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, 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 CHCs 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.

As a proud member of the Moving Maine Network, we support LD 1451 and thank Senator Tipping and the other co-sponsors for bringing this bill forward. This bill seeks to increase the efficiency and performance of human services transportation. If passed, LD 1451 will enable Maine to make better use of current resources and leverage additional federal funding for public and community transportation that is currently being "left on the table." This legislation will advance state-level interdepartmental coordination as recommended by the 2023-2026 Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Strategic Plan and Maine DOT's 2023 Strategic Transit Plan. It also supports the adoption of regional Mobility Management Hubs, building on efforts already taking place across our state by adding support and capacity to meet the need.

Throughout Maine, CHCs are a critical part of our healthcare infrastructure, providing innovative services that directly respond to the needs of their patients inside and outside of the exam room. For many, this includes helping patients connect with transportation resources to help them get to both medical appointments and travel to pharmacies, grocery stores, and community spaces – all important to ensuring the well-being of the whole person. Programs at each CHC may vary, but the intent is the same: to build stronger, healthier communities across our state. Many employ Community Health Workers or Outreach and Enrollment Specialists to connect patients with resources, and some health centers, due to the lack of access to any reliable transportation service in their service area, have established their own in-house transportation services to meet patient need.

Hometown Health Center (locations in Newport, Dexter, and Palmyra): Our Community Health Worker Program helps patients, and their families navigate and access community services. Not only do our Community Health Workers provide social support and informal counseling, but they work directly with our patients to assist in immediate needs such as food insecurity and transportation issues to access healthcare or pick up medications.

Sacopee Valley Health Center (located in Porter): Outreach and Enrollment Specialists help clients access healthcare by connecting them with or guiding them through the application process...They assist clients in applying for free care programs that provide discounts on hospital and specialist services. Other assistance includes connecting clients to resources throughout the

community by accessing programs for food, transportation, housing, heating assistance, and many others. This is an essential service for our community members.

LD 1451 uses national best practices to ensure that Mainers can access services and desired destinations. We encourage the committee to pass this important legislation. On behalf of Maine's Community Health Centers, 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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