

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
207-888-9826  
Julia.MacDonald@cancer.org  
<https://www.fightcancer.org/states/maine>



**Testimony of Julia MacDonald, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
In support of LD 1451 "An Act to Advance Coordination of Community Transportation"**

**April 23, 2025**

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Julia MacDonald, and I am the Maine Government Relations Director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). ACS CAN is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. We advocate for evidence-based public policies to reduce the cancer burden for everyone. As the nation's leading advocate for legislative solutions that are helping to lower cancer's impact, ACS CAN ensures that cancer patients, survivors, and their families have a voice in public policy matters at all levels of government.

On behalf of ACS CAN, I strongly urge you to support LD 1451 and thank Senator Tipping and the bill's cosponsors for bringing forward this important legislation.

Transportation is a critical, yet often overlooked, part of the cancer care journey. For too many Mainers—especially in our rural communities—transportation challenges become barriers to accessing timely, life-saving care. Our Road to Recovery program, which provides free rides to cancer-related medical appointments, is designed to meet this need. However, in Maine, this program currently only operates fully in a handful of counties due to a lack of sufficient infrastructure and resources. Many patients simply have no way to get to treatment. Missing appointments, particularly for chemotherapy or radiation, can be life-threatening.

In 2023, Maine spent \$206 million on community transportation for people who cannot drive themselves, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with limited incomes. Yet despite this significant investment, a 2024 survey shows that 40% of Maine adults still experience transportation insecurity. It's clear that the current system is not working as well as it should.

LD 1451 would advance coordination across agencies and regions and support the creation of Mobility Management Hubs—solutions that will make the system work better for patients. A regional Mobility Manager could help streamline services, reduce duplication, and bring community-based organizations together to create practical transportation options tailored to local needs. That means fewer missed appointments, better health outcomes and increased health equity.

I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1451. Transportation coordination is not only smart policy—it's a lifeline for patients.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Here are a few stories about people impacted by the Road to Recovery Program at American Cancer Society, that may benefit from this legislation:

#### Patient 1

ACS delivers transportation services in Maine through Road (only relaunched in limited counties) and through our transportation grants program, but there is more support needed to focus on the transportation barriers across our state. Here are some samples of people who have benefited from this program and who would benefit from

#### Patient 2

Patient lives in the northern part of our state and has been coming to treatment every 6 weeks since April of 2022. Patient travels about 273 miles one-way every 6 weeks to come to treatment/office visits and has been disabled since starting treatment. We have been providing gas cards through the ACS grant to this patient since December of 2022 for which she has been extremely appreciative. Because this patient lives so far from our clinic, her visit also requires an overnight stay at a local hotel. If it were not for the ACS transportation grant allowing us to provide this patient with gas assistance, it would be a much larger financial strain on her to be able to afford the overnight hotel stay and gas for her over 500-mile round trip visit to us every 6 weeks.

#### Patient 3

A subset of our cancer patients are "New Mainers". These are frequently asylum seekers or legal immigrants who are new to our country and without a lot of support. The Lyft and taxi funds provided to these patients is invaluable in helping them get to their medical appointments. Our Social Workers arrange the rides for them to ease their burden. While some take public transportation others live away from the limited bus service in Maine. Without this support, it would be extremely challenging, if not impossible, to provide needed cancer care. Utilizing this streamlined process allows our clinical staff to focus on the patient and their medical needs and mitigates some of the stress for these patients.

#### Patient 4

We had a patient diagnosed with multiple myeloma who was referred to our Community Resource Navigator based on financial need. This patient requires treatment twice a week and has to travel 60 miles round-trip from their home to receive care. Since June, the ACS Transportation grant has been able to fund 10 of this patient's visits (i.e., 20 one-way trips). We have found that supporting multiple trips for patients is often required, because if a patient isn't able to afford their first trip for treatment, they're likely not able to afford their fifth or fifteenth. This patient has expressed gratitude for this assistance, pointing out that there is no bus service in their area. "I am traveling about a 45-minute drive multiple times a week. The gas cards are a huge help!"

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Patient 5

We had a patient traveling every day for radiation and also getting chemo once a week. She shared how grateful she was for the help with the gas card, saying it was a life saver. She said she had been unable to work and was having a hard time making ends meet. She had a dog at home, so it wasn't feasible for her to stay down. She said she wouldn't have been able to afford the gas if it wasn't for the help of the gas card. She was very much appreciative as are all patients.