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Testimony in support:

LD 1734 "An Act to Exempt Over-the-counter Medicines from the Sales and Use Tax"

Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

May 14, 2025

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, my name is Laura Harper. I'm a senior associate at Moose Ridge Associates and I live in Hallowell. I am here today on behalf of my client, Maine Family Planning (MFP) to speak in favor of LD 1734, "An Act to Exempt Over-the-counter Medicines from the Sales and Use Tax."

MFP 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.

As experts in this care, we know that access to contraception is basic, lifesaving healthcare. Folks may use birth control methods to prevent pregnancy, to treat chronic disorders like endometriosis or premenstrual dysphoric disorder, or to regulate their cycle and manage heavy, painful periods. We are proud to provide access to birth control regardless of a patient's ability to pay. However, after a decade of flat funding many of our rural health centers are only open one or two days a week. Over-the-counter oral contraceptives, like the Opill, are a fantastic way to remove barriers and increase access to birth control in rural areas. However, over-the-counter birth control methods cost around twenty dollars every month. This price alone can be a barrier for young people and low-income people, who may not otherwise have access to these medications. Mainers are already facing enormous barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare, they shouldn't have to account for sales tax on these products as well.

Birth control, and other over-the-counter medications, are basic necessities, not luxury items. They should be taxed as such. Please vote "ought to pass" on LD 1734 to ensure that young people, poor people, and people in rural areas have equitable access to necessary medications.