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Testimony in support:

LD 1970, "An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Consent for HIV Testing and Disclosure of Related Medical Information for Insurance Purposes"

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

May 20, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, 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 support of LD 1970, "An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Consent for HIV Testing and Disclosure of Related Medical Information for Insurance Purposes."

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. This includes access to confidential HIV testing, prevention prescriptions, counseling and other resources, as well as referrals for HIV treatment.

This bill comes before you at a critical time for Maine. With an active HIV cluster in Penobscot County, it's imperative that Maine Lawmakers do anything and everything they can to remove barriers to testing and treatment. We support the goals of clinical providers such as Frannie Peabody Center, to update Maine statute to prevent gaps in testing and support linkages to care.

This bill accomplishes this goal while ensuring information and the opportunity to decline testing is still communicated to the individual. LD 1970 is in line with the recent Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services bulletin dated January 15th.¹ The bulletin includes recommendations that propose at least one HIV test in a lifetime for all persons 15 years of age or older, removing any upper age limit. The guidance from CMMS encourages implementation strategies such as adopting general consent processes consistent with other routine diagnostic tests: This strategy helps to normalize HIV screening as a routine, lifelong practice, reduce stigma, support earlier diagnosis and treatment, and ensure that anyone requesting an HIV test receives one. Furthermore, the bulletin

¹[https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib01152025.pdf__;!!LQXXzXolwdWWJrmZ4wl14s6LqplamEPpvX-ikFYdM8emz5SVAZS67hgA12mAXe8dpCvWBLpcVHycfy3_eDpnB08l0MrgNCVNTKxTfBrBcg\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib01152025.pdf__;!!LQXXzXolwdWWJrmZ4wl14s6LqplamEPpvX-ikFYdM8emz5SVAZS67hgA12mAXe8dpCvWBLpcVHycfy3_eDpnB08l0MrgNCVNTKxTfBrBcg$)

discusses other strategies to increase access to insurance coverage for testing which section 3 of the bill seeks to allow.

The bottom line is this bill will help remove gaps in clinical settings meaning more testing, earlier detection and treatment, and more lives saved.

In closing, we ask you to please vote LD 1970, "ought to pass." Thank you for your attention and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.