



State of Maine | 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony of Megan Stewart on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
February 4, 2026

Supporting:

LD 2154 "An Act to Establish the Health Information Technology Fund to Support a State-designated Statewide Health Information Exchange"
Sponsored by Representative Gattine

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Megan Stewart, Director of Government Relations 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.

Maine's Community Health Centers rely on the Health Information Exchange (HIE) as a critical tool to coordinate care, enhance patient safety, streamline public health reporting, and reduce unnecessary duplicate testing, saving both time and money for patients. The HIE ensures that when a patient undergoes testing or treatment, their medical record is updated in near real time for all providers participating in the HIE. For example, if a patient who typically receives care in York travels to Bangor and seeks treatment for a cough at a local health center, a chest X-ray taken there can be shared through the HIE. If the health center participates in the HIE, this would allow the patient's primary care provider to receive the results and promptly coordinate appropriate follow-up care.

The HIE is an essential tool for supporting positive health outcomes, which is another reason why it is so critical that more physicians can use it. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has already recognized the importance of the HIE to Maine residents by awarding Maine 75% of the HIE's operation costs, but they must receive the 25% match from the State. Passing LD 2154 will support CHCs and healthcare organizations across Maine as they face growing financial pressures from rising costs. During a time when all expenses are being scrutinized, it is vital that the HIE continues to be utilized by as many healthcare providers throughout Maine as possible. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support LD 2154.

On behalf of Maine's Community Health Centers, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at mstewart@mepca.org with any follow-up questions.

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