



**LEGAL SERVICES
FOR MAINE ELDERS**

LD 2146 An Act to Increase Access to Critical Vaccines
LD 2071 An Act to Expand Access to Vaccines Approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration
by Allowing Pharmacists to Prescribe, Dispense and Administer Vaccines and Require Insurance Coverage

Testimony of Marge Kilkelly for Legal Services for Maine Elders
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage Insurance and Finance Services
Feb. 10, 2026

Good afternoon Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage Insurance and Finance Services

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am testifying on behalf of Legal Services for Maine Elders in support of LD~~1246~~ and 2071.

The best and most cost effective healthcare is **prevention**. Preventing disease or reducing the severity of a disease improves an individual's quality of life while saving money. Prevention has many facets but one of the most effective is vaccines.

Over the past 50 years' immunization efforts have saved at least 154 million lives worldwide; that's 6 lives every minute of every year over the past 50 years WHO Study 2024 . Widespread vaccination has nearly eradicated diseases like smallpox and significantly reduced instances of measles, tetanus and Hep B.

The National Council on Aging, in Jan. 2026 article recommends people over 65 get vaccines for flu, shingles, pneumonia, RSV, Covid, and Hep B. The impact of these and other preventable diseases on older people can be devastating; leading to serious illness, hospitalization and even death. The personal cost of serious illness for those on Medicare can mean the difference between buying food, paying the light bill or buying medicine. On a fixed income that is already stretched by high costs this can be financially crippling.

The bills before you 1246 and 2071 provide guidance about which vaccines are recommended and access to vaccines; both critical to an effective vaccination program. I recently spoke to a friend who wanted a RSV vaccine but her insurance denied it- the OOP cost of that one vaccine is between \$275 and \$350.

Pharmacists are well qualified to prescribe, dispense as well as administer vaccinations. Pharmacy based programs improve availability and reduce the need for an appointment with a PCP- which often requires a long wait.

Ease of access leads to higher vaccination rates in a community (herd immunity) and helps to protect people who are unable to be vaccinated like infants and people with compromised immune systems.

We urge the passage of both LD 1246 and LD 2071 and thank the sponsors for bringing this critical legislation forward.

LEGAL SERVICES FOR MAINE ELDERS, INC.
5 Wabon Street, Augusta, Maine 04333
(207) 621-0087 Fax (207) 621-0742
Offices in Augusta, Bangor, Lewiston, Biddeford and Presque Isle
LSE Helpline 1-800-750-5353 (Voice/TTY)
www.maineelse.org