



*LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire is an association representing mission-driven senior living and long-term care providers in Maine and New Hampshire. Our member organizations include nursing homes, assisted living programs, federally-assisted and market-rate housing, and Life Plan Communities (continuing care retirement communities).  
Our Mission: Inspiring our members to pursue innovation and the best life for older adults.  
Our Vision: LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire is a recognized, transformational leader in shaping society's vision of aging.*

**February 11, 2026**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Denise Vachon, and I am here on behalf of MaineCare-participating nursing care and assisted living members of **LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire** to speak **in opposition to LD 2177**.

LeadingAge ME NH represents mission-driven providers that serve older adults and people living with disabilities, many who participate in MaineCare-supported assisted living and nursing care programs specifically to ensure that financially vulnerable residents can remain in their communities as their care needs increase.

These programs were built on a **mutual commitment between** Providers committed to operating licensed, compliant, and high-quality programs that serve Maine citizens in their most vulnerable moments, and the State which, in return, committed to providing **reliable reimbursement** that recognizes the real costs of staffing, operations, and maintaining safe and dignified living environments. This partnership has been essential to sustaining care for those who depend on it.

LD 2177 fundamentally weakens that partnership by making reimbursement **contingent on available funding** rather than a dependable component of the MaineCare system. This change sends a clear message to providers that funding for essential services is no longer assured. When reimbursement is unpredictable, providers are forced to do more with less, undermining their ability to plan responsibly and pursue excellence. Unreliable funding pressures providers to make impossible tradeoffs—limiting wage growth, reducing benefits, cutting services, closing beds, or avoiding MaineCare admissions altogether. These pressures directly contribute to staffing challenges, reduced access to care, and growing instability across the long-term care system.

We regularly discuss closures, workforce shortages, recruitment and retention challenges, and rising costs. These issues all stem from the same root cause: **a reimbursement system that providers cannot rely on**. Without a stable and predictable funding structure, sustainability is not achievable, and access to high-quality care for Maine's most vulnerable residents will continue to erode.

What providers need is a **clear, consistently budgeted baseline for reimbursement**—whether tied to a percentage, benchmark, or other objective measure—that is free from contingencies, claw-backs, or uncertainty. The State must prioritize this partnership with fair and reasonable annual adjustments that reflect the true cost of care, including competitive wages and benefits for the workforce delivering these services.

LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire urges you to **reject the elements of LD 2177 that make funding inconsistent and unpredictable** and to instead rework the bill to ensure reliable, sustainable reimbursement for providers, consumers, and taxpayers alike. A strong, dependable partnership between the State and providers is essential to keeping this critical system available to those who need it, when they need it.

Thank you for your time and service