



Consumers for Affordable Health Care

Advocating the right to quality, affordable health care for all Mainers.

P.O. Box 2490
Augusta, ME 04338
Telephone: 1-800-965-7476
Fax: 1-888-214-5233
www.mainecahc.org
consumerhealth@mainecahc.org

Testimony In Support of:

LD 2198, An Act to Implement Certain Recommendations Related to the Ratio of Debt to Equity in Transactions Involving Health Care Entities from the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State

February 18, 2026

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. I am Kate Ende, Policy Director for Consumers for Affordable Health Care. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of LD 2198, An Act to Implement Certain Recommendations Related to the Ratio of Debt to Equity in Transactions Involving Health Care Entities from the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State.

Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates the right to quality, affordable health care for every person in Maine. As designated by Maine's Attorney General, CAHC serves as Maine's Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), which operates a toll-free HelpLine. Our HelpLine fields thousands of calls and emails every year from people across Maine who need help obtaining, keeping, using, or fixing problems with private health insurance or with accessing or affording health care services. CAHC also serves as the Ombudsman program for Maine's Medicaid program, MaineCare, and helps people apply for and navigate the enrollment and access to health care services under MaineCare. It is with that background that we provide these comments.

We strongly support LD 2198, which would implement important recommendations from the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State. This bill aims to establish clear and prudent standards regarding the ratio of debt to equity in transactions involving health care entities.

Transactions involving high levels of debt relative to equity introduce financial instability into organizations that provide essential health services. Excessive debt burdens can limit a facility's ability to invest in patient care and sustain operations and may lead to reductions in services and higher costs for patients. By implementing guidance on acceptable ratios of debt to equity, this bill helps ensure that changes in ownership do not worsen access to health care delivery and that transactions align with long-term community health needs rather than short-term financial gains. Better financial practices lead to more predictable, reliable care for patients across Maine.

For these reasons, we urge you to support LD 2198. Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.