

Jim Lysen

LD 2196

Honorable committee members:

Good afternoon. My name is Jim Lysen, and I live in Lewiston. After 15 years as Planning Director in the City of Lewiston, I transitioned to become the Executive Director of Community Clinical Services, a Federally-Qualified Health Center affiliated with St. Mary's Regional Hospital. During the peak time of my Directorship, I had 23 different practice sites, including 5 School-Based Health Centers.

Much of my career was spent attempting to reduce barriers to health care. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 2196.

A few facts about Maine:

- 1) Four out of 10 Maine people have medical debt, including from hospitals.
- 2) Maine's big hospitals have some of the highest rates in the country
- 3) Hospital prices are one of the biggest drivers of overall health care costs, and they are helping to drive the cost of health insurance premiums.
- 4) For 2026, some small businesses and individuals saw their health insurance premiums increase by more than 20%.

None of that is sustainable. Wages aren't growing fast enough to keep up with rising health care costs, and people are being priced out of care.

The sick get sicker. Injuries linger and get worse. Debt piles up. Lives are ruined.

LD 2196 isn't a perfect solution to our crashing health care system, but it does include solid steps to contain costs and hold the line on future increases.

The bill breaks down administrative barriers for care, invests in primary care and caps increasing hospital costs – while also protecting smaller hospitals and critical access facilities.

Look at the facts. It's not ideology. It's math.

If we don't do something, our current health care system is going to collapse, with only the wealthiest able to afford care.

No one should have to go into debt to see a doctor. Costs should be growing so fast. I hope that you will take action to protect consumers in our state.

Thank you for your time.