



**Northern Light
Health**

**LD 1484 An Act To Enhance the ConnectMaine Authority's Capacity To Provide
World-class Internet
Testimony in Support
April 27, 2021**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN, I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations to speak in support of this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with over 12,000 employees statewide.

Northern Light Health is a technology leader in Maine providing a variety of telehealth services including primary care, cardiology, stroke, psychiatry, trauma, pediatric care and in-home telemonitoring services statewide. Over the past few years we have worked closely with the MaineCare program and commercial insurers to align clinical advancement in telehealth technology with payment policies. The MaineCare program now has a specific chapter dedicated to policy and payment for telehealth services and we are proud to have one of the most comprehensive Medicaid telehealth benefits in the country.

Maine is a state with limited resource and advancing technology is the most cost-effective opportunity we have to increase access to a variety of health care services for citizens in rural Maine. Realistically, for many rural areas technology is the only viable option to increase access to care provided by Northern Light Health clinicians, particularly access to specialists.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we significantly expanded telehealth throughout our health system to ensure access to care from the safety of the patient's home. Thousands of patients received technology-based care at home supporting individualized health outcomes with positive patient feedback. Unfortunately, Patients living in regions with broadband challenges experienced less than optimal video home visits, on occasion the broadband capacity simply could not support the video encounter. When this occurred providers and our home care team provided telephonic visits, not our preferred method of technology supported care. The bill before you today is particularly important as it creates the ConnectMaine Authority to oversee the allocation of federal resources to build out Maine's broadband infrastructure. We are in full support and thank you for the opportunity to submit comment on this important legislation.

Northern Light Health
Government Relations
43 Whiting Hill Road
Brewer, Maine 04412

Office 207-861-3282
Fax 207-872-2030

Northern Light Health

Acadia Hospital
A.R. Gould Hospital
Beacon Health
Blue Hill Hospital
C.A. Dean Hospital
Eastern Maine Medical Center
Home Care & Hospice
Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Sebasticook Valley Hospital