

**LD 274, Resolve, Directing the Maine Health Data Organization to Determine the
Best Methods and Definitions to Use in Collecting Data to Better Understand
Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Provision of Health Care in Maine**

SUMMARY:

This resolve directs the Maine Health Data Organization to determine the best methods and definitions to use in collecting data to assist in analyzing the origins of racial and ethnic disparities in health care in the State.

The bill requires MHDO to submit a report based on its evaluation, including suggested legislation, by October 1, 2021 to the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. The bill authorizes the Committee to submit legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. Information provided by the Maine Health Data Organization indicated that MHDO's data users group has stressed importance of collecting and releasing data specific to race and ethnicity and that federal CDC data code guidelines are in place for race and ethnicity. More recently, interest among users group has broadened to include data related to social determinants of health to help understand health outcomes and disparities based on race and ethnicity. If resolve is enacted, MHDO indicated they would complete an environmental scan to identify best practices for defining, collecting and integrating this data into existing MHDO data sets.

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ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION (cont'd):

2. Consider current gaps in data collection and potential for bill to lead to improved data collection and analysis? Testimony from several interested parties noted data is needed to measure racial and ethnic disparities to help inform policymaking in this area.
3. Consider adding language to specify that MHDO consult with certain stakeholders like the Maine CDC and Maine Public Health Association? As drafted, MHDO would have discretion as to how to conduct the evaluation and who to consult with.
4. As drafted, LD 274 requires MHDO to submit a report to the HCIFS Committee by October 1, 2021. Bills and resolves enacted during a First Regular Session generally become effective 90 days following adjournment sine die of the Legislature. If enacted, LD 274 would likely become effective sometime in September 2021. Consider the timing? Consider adding an emergency preamble and emergency clause so resolve would become effective upon Governor's signature? Or, alternatively, consider extending report back date for MHDO with understanding that resolve would authorize submission of legislation to the next session starting in January 2022?

FISCAL INFORMATION:

Not yet determined