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February 10, 2021

Senators Pouliot and Maxmin
Representatives Meyer, Corey, Craven, Fay, Madigan, Pluecker, and Stover
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

I am writing in support of LD17 and LD 166 as a representative of Spectrum Generations, the Area Agency on Aging.

Maine's five area agencies on aging were established through a Maine gubernatorial executive order on September 19, 1973. We are all IRS designated 501(c)3 non-profit organizations and collectively provide a broad array of home and community-based services that support older Maine residents in maintaining their independence, sense of purpose and social connections. These services include: Meals on wheels; meals served in community setting; adult day services for seniors with dementia and those with intellectual disabilities; education and supports for family caregivers of frail elders; Medicare education; supportive housing; and, extensive volunteer opportunities; we offer a comprehensive "first stop" resource center for elders and their family members seeking to identify public and private benefits or services to increase their quality of life.

We are supporting the legislation to provide rural transportation services to the elderly adults with disabilities receiving home and community benefits, and the legislation to allow participants in the qualified Medicare beneficiary program to qualify for MaineCare transportation services. Safe, reliable, and affordable transportation is an important Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) element that can support states to expand and enhance HCBS systems. Transportation can help individuals to achieve community living goals, to access preventive health care, to increase functional independence, and to improve health and well-being. Non-medical transportation can enable individuals receiving HCBS to gain access to community-based activities and resources consistent with their service plan. Examples include transportation to grocery stores and places of employment. Transportation to and from medical care is a mandatory assurance in the MaineCare program when the beneficiary has no other available means to access medical services. Federal Medicaid regulations require states to detail the methods to be used to meet this requirement in the state's approved state plan. Maine is responsible for determining how to structure and administer the required transportation assurance under broad federal requirements. Maine has the flexibility in designing and implementing non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services.

Thank you for your attention and action on this issue,

Gerard Queally
President/CEO
Spectrum Generations