

February 9, 2021

**Testimony in Support of LD 47: An Act to Fund the State's Free Health Clinics**

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am Jeffrey P. Maher, MD, and I live in Brunswick. I am writing in support of LD 47. I have worked as a Family and Community Doctor in the Brunswick area for 21 years. During that time, I have seen so many people harmed by their lack of access to affordable, quality healthcare. Brunswick locally and Maine regionally have fantastic health care facilities; caring and well trained nurses and doctors; and friendly and grateful neighbors. Living and working here has been a true blessing for me personally and professionally. Sadly, I know all too well how the system for paying for health care leaves out too many families.

Despite very recent government sponsored efforts to plug the gap in access between the truly destitute and those with adequate insurance, there remains too large a population of our neighbors who have no insurance and who rely on charity care for their healthcare needs. Currently we continue to see several hundred individuals in our medical clinic, enroll hundreds more in our community pharmacy prescription program, and are just scratching the surface for dental needs.

For the past several years, I have volunteered as a physician provider at Oasis Free Clinics to do my part in bridging that gap. It is a role I cherish. Only rarely am I afforded an opportunity for direct legislative testimony for budgetary help. Today is one of those days. Please help your neighbors receiving care at Oasis Free Clinic in Brunswick and the many similar organizations throughout Maine by voting yes in support of LD 47.

Thank you.