



February 8, 2021

Senator Ned Claxton, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Cross Office Building, Room 209
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 17, Resolve, To Provide Rural Nonmedical Transportation Services to the Elderly and Adults with Disabilities Receiving Home and Community Benefits under the MaineCare Program

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

My name is Lauren Wille and I am an attorney at Disability Rights Maine. Thank you for the opportunity for Disability Rights Maine (DRM) to provide testimony in support of LD 17, which would direct the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a pilot project to allow elderly adults and adults with disabilities to receive up to \$2,000 toward non-medical transportation, and to submit an evaluation of the pilot project by January 30, 2023.

The Section 19 waiver provides support services to individuals who qualify for nursing facility level of care, by allowing them to receive services in their homes and communities, instead of in institutional settings. The target population for this waiver is elderly adults and other adults with disabilities.

It is no secret that transportation is a significant barrier preventing adults with disabilities from achieving full community inclusion. When people with disabilities are isolated, society as a whole suffers a detriment—it is deprived of citizens who can contribute to the greater good. Lack of access to transportation inhibits the ability to be an employee, an employer, a consumer, a volunteer, a friend, and a significant other.

160 Capitol Street, Suite 4, Augusta, ME 04330
207.626.2774 • 1.800.452.1948 • Fax: 207.621.1419 • drme.org

MAINE'S PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY AGENCY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Access to transportation allows people with disabilities to be more independent, and helps them avoid or delay institutionalization.

Access to transportation that will allow individuals receiving Home- and Community-Based Services to have full community inclusion isn't just a good idea, it's also a federal mandate. The HCBS Settings Rule requires that all individuals who receive these services have the same access to the community as individuals not receiving services in order to continue to receive federal funding. Transportation is a crucial component of compliance with this Settings Rule.

For the foregoing reasons, DRM supports LD 17, which will allow Maine to explore ways to improve transportation to individuals with disabilities who receive Home- and Community-Based Services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lauren Wille

Lauren Wille, Esq.
Staff Attorney
Disability Rights Maine