
**Testimony of Andrea Mancuso
In Support of LD 265
“An Act to Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday, February 24, 2021**

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am writing on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV)¹ in Support of LD 265, “An Act to Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care.”

For many, there will not be a period of time in which they access healthcare providers more than that period of time from early pregnancy through postpartum care. While postpartum care has traditionally centered around a single clinical visit several weeks following birth, there has been a shift in practice to recognize that postpartum care is an ongoing process, ideally consisting of multiple visits and an opportunity for ongoing care. Mental health is a major concern during and after pregnancy. Care for new parents identified as experiencing postpartum depression and/or other chronic conditions may last far beyond the 60 days of coverage currently provided for.

MCEDV and our member programs encourage you to support a strong public health structure as an important piece of domestic abuse and violence prevention and intervention. Well documented is the correlation between economic stress on new parents and an increase in domestic abuse and violence. Similarly, there is a correlation between depression and domestic abuse, with some research indicating that new parents experiencing domestic abuse and violence are twice as likely to also report experiencing postpartum depression, presenting risks not only to the new parent but also to their infant. Increasing and enhancing access to MaineCare in the postpartum period would be directly associated with an increased opportunity for our public health system to appropriately screen for and identify those new parents experiencing domestic abuse and violence and make connections and referrals to help support appropriate, safe, and early interventions. With the known impact of exposure in early childhood to one parent making a choice to abuse

¹ MCEDV serves a membership of the eight regional domestic violence resource centers (DVRCs) across the state, as well as the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine. Last year, these programs together served more than 12,000 Maine survivors of domestic abuse and violence and their children.

another parent, expanding the public health structure as proposed in LD 265 creates opportunity not only to enhance the long-term health outcomes of those new parents directly receiving expanded coverage but also to enhance long-term health outcomes of their children. For these reasons, we encourage you to support expanding MaineCare coverage for postpartum care up to a full year after birth.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this issue. MCEDV and our member programs are happy to serve as a resource to the Committee as you continue to discuss this issue.

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