

Deborah Patten MD FAAP
Bath ME

To the Honorable Sen. Clayton, Rep. Meyer, and the Joint Committee of HHS:
I appreciate the opportunity today to strongly urge passage of LD 372, which expands coverage of uninsured children. As a Maine native and practicing pediatrician in the Midcoast region for more than 30 years, I have seen too many tragic consequences of being uninsured. Toddlers have arrived moribund, children with psychological and behavior issues have worsened irreparably, and autistic patients have lost critically valuable treatment time. When there are financial constraints, there are delays, and we lose opportunities to prevent, counsel, immunize, diagnose and treat. There are grave consequences for the child, but also for the suffering family, and the burdened social safety net. Children lose developmental potential, families lose resilience and economic security. Furthermore, the number of the newly uninsured due to the pandemic job loss is unknown but growing. Thank you for supporting this coverage, which offers only benefits for our children, their families, and the state.