



**LD 590 An Act To Require MaineCare Coverage for Ostomy Equipment
Testimony in Support
March 16, 2021**

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Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Sebasticook Valley Hospital

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN, I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations to speak in support of this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with over 12,000 employees statewide.

To prepare testimony I worked with Northern Light Home Care nurses to understand the challenges our patients experience when coverage policies determine ostomy products and supplies rather than decisions based on the needs of the patient. Our nurses are the most effective messenger of the policy failure.

It is nothing but a challenge to get MaineCare patients needed supplies. Once you find a pouch that works, MaineCare will not cover that pouch and companies must then provide products that are subpar for the patient, the product is not what is recommended or effective. The patients then have trouble with adherence or skin issues or leakage and have to have it home nurse to come back in to figure out what's wrong. Not being able to get what you need for an Ostomate is a nightmare for the client and for the nurse. We both fail.

It is so distressing for an ostomy patient to not have the proper equipment or not have it in a timely manner, to be able to successfully manage their ostomy. It can lead to skin breakdown around the stoma, pain and suffering and emotional hardship. When patients don't have the proper equipment, it results in more frequent nursing visits, which will cost MaineCare more money in the long run. Ostomates need what they need, and they need it promptly.

The current policy fails to meet the needs of our patients, often costs MaineCare more with increased nursing visits to address product failure resulting in clinical impact and fails our skilled nursing professionals as they work every day to address the health and well being of our ostomy patients.

We ask that you support this important legislation.

Thank you.