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**Testimony of Rep. Margaret Craven introducing
LD 1064, An Act To Advance Palliative Care Utilization in the State
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**

Good afternoon, Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and fellow members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Margaret Craven, and I represent House District 59, which is part of Lewiston. I am pleased to be in front of you this morning to introduce **LD 1064, An Act To Advance Palliative Care Utilization in the State**.

Palliative care is a medical approach that can begin when a patient is diagnosed with a life-threatening disease or major illness and can occur simultaneously with a person's treatment plan. The purpose of palliative care is to prevent and relieve suffering of a patient and their family, which includes physical and mental suffering.

Palliative care is both a medical specialty and a team-based approach to the care of patients living with serious medical illness. Palliative care offers an additional layer of support as patients experience the realities of their diseases and treatments. It offers excellent pain and symptom management, emotional and spiritual supports and, perhaps most importantly, expert conversations regarding wishes for future care.

Integrating palliative care into the treatment plans of all patients with serious illnesses, like advanced cancer, heart disease, lung disease or dementia, has become the standard of care. Unfortunately, most patients in Maine who need palliative care do not receive it. The primary barrier to the delivery of palliative care is that there is no reliable, sustainable reimbursement for palliative care under the MaineCare program. Palliative care is, by definition, interdisciplinary and team-based, and reimbursement models to support this care must be developed if patients are ever to receive the benefits from it.

LD 1064 directs the Department of Health and Human Services to provide reimbursement under the MaineCare program for palliative care. It further directs the department to adopt rules for delivering palliative care throughout the state and to work with stakeholders to distribute educational materials to health care providers.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you have for me.