



LD 1064 An Act To Advance Palliative Care Utilization in the State

Testimony in Support of Sponsor Amendment

April 1, 2021

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 speaking 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.

I want to begin my testimony by thanking Representative Craven for offering an amended version of this bill. Northern Light Health is in full support of directing MaineCare to establish an interdisciplinary team reimbursement rate for palliative care.

Every day palliative care clinicians throughout Northern Light Health help patients navigate the challenges of serious illness. Our multidisciplinary team helps patients feel better by addressing side-effects of disease and treatment and addressing the emotional, practical, social or spiritual problems that serious illness can cause. With expert care and support from our team of doctors, nurses, social workers and therapists, quality of life is improved and stress for patients and families is reduced. Palliative care is provided to patients in our hospitals, outpatient settings and to patients at home.

This bill represents a significant step forward for the MaineCare program by establishing a dedicated reimbursement rate that will expand access to comprehensive palliative care services for MaineCare beneficiaries. The bill requires the department to use the National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care to advise development on the rule ensuring an evidence- based foundation for reimbursement. The bill also brings expertise of the Maine Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council and the Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine to advise the department on education related to palliative care and MaineCare reimbursement. The reimbursement rate and rules will be built on a very strong foundation.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of this very important legislation.

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Northern Light Health

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Home Care & Hospice
Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
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