

Donna Wiegler
Swan's Island

I would like to offer this written testimony in support of LD 1064 – An Act To Advance Palliative Care Utilization in the State.

As a stage IV ovarian cancer patient, I have been involved with MDI Hospital's Palliative Care Team for a few years. The support and education that I have received from the team, Vanessa Little, Palliative Care Physician, Paula Huntsman, Registered Nurse, and Heather Sinclair, Licensed Social Worker, has helped me to navigate my journey through advanced stage cancer. I have benefitted greatly from palliative care and feel this should be a service available to all Maine residents, regardless of their health insurance status. It should not be a service only for those with private insurance, like me, but should be accessible to those on Maine Care as well.

End of life services, like palliative care and hospice should be available to all who need them.

In addition to being a cancer patient, I run the health center on Swan's Island where I live. I am a trained hospice volunteer. I understand the challenges of end of life care, both personally, and from my patients' perspective. I believe palliative care can offer some stability to patients and their families. The challenges faced by chronically ill patients are many, financial, emotional, and physical, and the guidance offered by the palliative care team makes this very difficult time easier to manage. Through education, patients and caregivers learn what the available options are.

Everyone should be entitled to this type of care.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience and opinion on this matter.

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