

"Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Henoc Ngoy, I work with New Mainers Public Health Initiative as a Community Health worker, I live in Lewiston, Maine and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 718. "

As Community Health Workers , we are front line Public Health Workers that educate, advocate and empower community members on a variety of health and link them to available community resources and health care programs.

I arrived in Maine in 2018, looking for personal safety from Africa; the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the country where I experienced persecution.

I had applied for free health care at DHHS, my request was rejected, luckily for me, Saint Mary's Hospital had granted me free care for 6 months.

When I got the work permit like I was working as CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant). In March 2020, I fell ill and my employer had demanded me to resign because of my illness continued and it took me 6 months without insurance. You can imagine how so excruciating and miserable it was.

Since February 2021, our Congolese community has lost two young people, one in their thirties of age and the other in their twenties who died in the interval of a year. months of sudden death. all this because the check up is very expensive. I myself am a living testimony, for a simple check-up visit to the doctor, it generated 5 medical tests (twice whole blood, stool, ultra sound, CT scan) and four times the visit to the doctors, imagine you know how much I have to pay in the interval between October and April, medical prescription Vitamin D only.

The USA is the world's biggest power, but health care is extremely expensive, compared to countries like South Africa and even Zambia where medical care is free from the poorest to the richest.

We beg you, Honorable committee for the wellbeing and protection of all our neighbors and families of our state please vote yes.

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I say and I thank you.