



**LD 878: Resolve, To Increase MaineCare  
Reimbursement Rates for Service  
Provided by Direct Care Workers**

April 20, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Laurie Belden and I serve as the executive director of the Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine -- a membership organization representing home care, home health care and hospice providers across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 878 as presented by Senator Keim.

The Alliance is a network of home care and hospice providers across our State delivering home-based care to older adults and disabled individuals of all ages - allowing them to stay in their home and community. Annually, our provider members deliver care to more than 45,000 clients in their residences across Maine, traveling more than 20 million miles. Collectively, home care, home health care and hospice members employ more than 15,000 staff – a sector of the healthcare continuum contributing to Maine’s economic growth and prosperity.

According to PHI Workforce Data Center, there are over 16,000 home health and personal care aides across the State assisting older adults and people with disabilities with essential daily tasks and activities. These are typically entry-level, low wage positions. This quality, compassionate, and often intimate care, preserves the patients’ dignity and independence through assistance with bathing, toileting, dressing and eating.

MaineCare beneficiaries account for a significant portion of the client base of our home care, home health care, and hospice providers. These rates have not kept pace in recent years with increased cost of living, workforce shortages and competition, employment trends, etc. and employers are already having a difficult time remaining in operation and maintaining necessary staffing levels.

In January 2020, the Commission to Study Long Term Care Workforce Issues released its findings and made specific recommendations including increasing reimbursement rates to reflect current and future structural additions to provider costs, including increases in minimum wage, paid time off, electronic visit verification requirements, background checks and potentially fingerprinting.

Maine’s home care provider community is lauding this bill as a step toward protecting beneficiary access to quality care services which otherwise could be compromised for our growing population of older adults and individuals with disabilities. Overall, the nominal increase of \$2/hour is a small price to pay to continue to get approved services into the homes of MaineCare beneficiaries (particularly when comparing costs to the much steeper price of care if beneficiaries transition to institutional care).

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