

MaineHealth

MaineHealth Local Health Systems

Franklin Community
Health Network
LincolnHealth
MaineHealth Care At Home
Maine Behavioral Healthcare
Memorial Hospital
Maine Medical Center
NorDx
Pen Bay Medical Center
Southern Maine Health Care
Synernet
Waldo County General Hospital
Western Maine Health

Part of the MaineHealth Family

MaineHealth Accountable
Care Organization

MaineHealth Affiliates

MaineGeneral Health
Mid Coast-Parkview Health
New England Rehabilitation
Hospital of Portland
St. Mary's Health System

Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth

In Strong Opposition to LD 867,

“An Act to Prohibit Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for 5 Years to Allow for Safety Testing and Investigations into Reproductive Harm”

January 11, 2022

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Sarah Calder, Director of Government Affairs at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in strong opposition to LD 867, “An Act to Prohibit Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for 5 Years to Allow for Safety Testing and Investigations into Reproductive Harm.”

MaineHealth is a non-profit health care system that provides the full continuum of health care services to the residents of eleven counties in Maine and one in New Hampshire through its nine acute care hospitals, physician practices, lab, home health care services, and an integrated continuum of inpatient and community-based behavioral health services. Every day, MaineHealth’s 22,000 care team members work tirelessly to support our vision of “Working together so our communities are the healthiest in America,” by providing safe, high-quality care to the residents in our service area.

As part of that work and in an effort to deliver on our values of excellence, respect, and being patient-centered, MaineHealth has made a promise to our communities to consistently deliver safe and high-quality patient care. To achieve this goal, we must do everything we can to prevent the spread of disease, including getting vaccinated. We know that vaccinations protect both our care team members and those they interact with, including patients, co-workers, loved ones, and the communities in which they live.

To fulfill this promise, MaineHealth has a mandated vaccine policy for all care team members that is consistent with State law (Rubeola (measles), Mumps, Rubella (German measles), Varicella (chicken pox), Hepatitis, and Influenza) and allows for exemptions only for legitimate medical reasons. Prior to the Maine CDC updating its immunization requirements for health care workers last October to include COVID-19 vaccination, MaineHealth mandated a COVID-19 vaccine policy (with the same exceptions for medical requests). While it was a painful reality that we lost some valuable care team members due to this decision, the mandate very clearly reflects our commitment to our

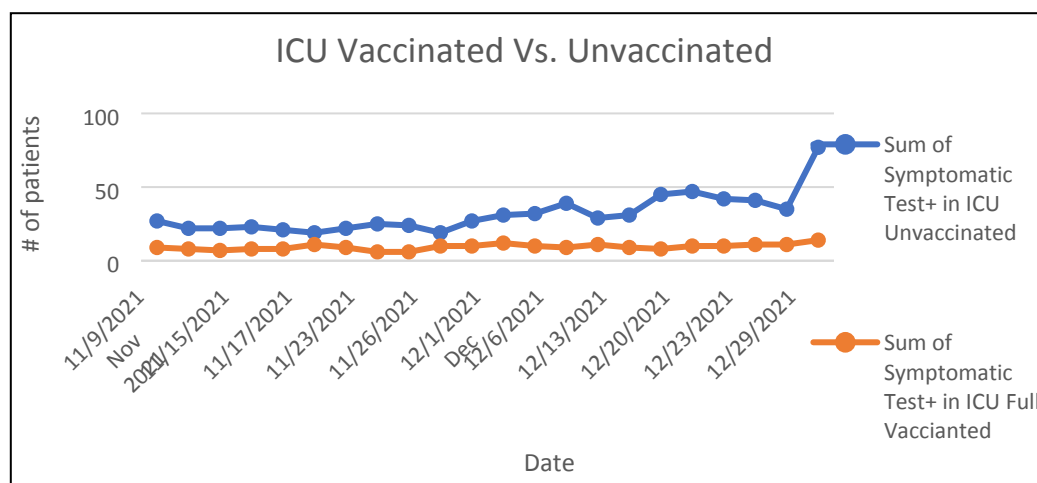
vision and our patient-centered value by protecting and preserving our workforce.

As we have shared with you before, MaineHealth hospitals are full or over capacity, and the number of patients hospitalized due to COVID-19 are the highest since the pandemic began. The attached chart uses data from last week and shows that our patients hospitalized in the ICU with COVID-19 are largely unvaccinated. That is because vaccines work. In fact, the second chart attached shows that an unvaccinated Mainer is 8 times more likely to be hospitalized than someone who is vaccinated.

Additionally, the nation's leading health care provider organizations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics have [jointly urged](#) all pregnant individuals—along with recently pregnant, planning to become pregnant, lactating and other eligible individuals—to be vaccinated against COVID-19 because pregnant individuals are at [increased risk](#) of severe COVID-19 infection, including death. Moreover, people who have COVID-19 during pregnancy are also at increased risk for preterm birth and stillbirth. There is also no evidence that shows that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems in women or men, and the COVID-19 vaccines are not [shown](#) to increase risk of preterm birth or stillbirth.

Our care team members are exhausted. They have been on the frontlines of this pandemic for over two years with no end in sight. Yet every day, they show up to continue meeting the needs of our communities. With those health care heroes in mind, I urge you and all who are listening, to please get vaccinated, get boosted, and wear a mask. Vaccination is our best path to ending the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths in Maine Among Fully Vaccinated vs. Among Unvaccinated* 5/8/21 – 12/23/21

	COVID Numbers- Maine			Ratios	
	Among Total Population	Among Fully Vaccinated*	Among Unvaccinated*	Among Fully Vaccinated*	Among Unvaccinated*
Population Size	1,344,212	954,336	389,876		
Cases	76,182	20,702	55,480	1 in 46	1 in 7
Hospitalizations	1,417	481	936	1 in 1,984	1 in 417
Deaths	599	222	377	1 in 4,299	1 in 1,034

	COVID Numbers- Maine			Rates (N/100,000)	
	Among Total Population	Among Fully Vaccinated*	Among Unvaccinated*	Among Fully Vaccinated*	Among Unvaccinated*
Population Size	1,344,212	954,336	389,876		
Cases	76,182	20,702	55,480	2,169	14,230
Hospitalizations	1,417	481	936	50	240
Deaths	599	222	377	23	97

* COVID-19 cases among individuals who have been fully vaccinated are classified as vaccine breakthrough cases. A person is considered fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Unvaccinated cases include those who have not received a full dose of the vaccine.

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NOTE: On 11/19 a correction was made regarding ME vaccination totals. 25,000+ doses marked as a "Final Dose" were re-classified as an "Additional/Booster Dose". There were additional reductions of numbers of "Final Doses" - as of 11/27, there were approximately 4,000 fewer than on 11/19.