



## THE MAINE EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

GOVERNOR BAXTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

One Mackworth Island, Falmouth, ME 04105  
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Executive Director

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Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services committee. My name is Karen Hopkins, and I am the Executive Director of The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf. I was also a member of the CMV workgroup that created the recommendations for the Joint Standing Committee of Health and Human Services. It is an honor to be speaking to you today in full support of LD 1747.

The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf holds the responsibility of providing early intervention and education for deaf and hard of hearing children throughout the state of Maine. Over the past 15 years we have seen a drastic increase in the number of children diagnosed with CMV, unfortunately these diagnosis are coming much too late. We have witnessed Deaf children with no language, children with multiple medical challenges and families with major heartache.

I remember distinctly the day I sat with a family of a toddler who had just found out their daughter was Deaf, in addition to having multiple medical challenges caused by CMV. Not only was this family struggling with the diagnosis of CMV, they were pained by the knowledge that the lifelong challenges their daughter and family were going to face could have been prevented. The mother, repeatedly shared..."if only I knew what I know now...". Unfortunately, this situation has become all too common.

What we know now is that educating ob-gyn's, pediatricians and pregnant women about CMV prevention and providing targeted screening for CMV to infants can change the life of children and their families.

Maine is fortunate to have begun this process. The CMV workgroup has laid the groundwork for what is needed in Maine to address CMV. The recommendations of this workgroup comprised of Maine specialists mirror many of the recommendations of the International CMV workgroup. Maine has an opportunity to be at the forefront of preventing and treating CMV in infants and changing language and developmental outcomes for children.

Our next step is the passage of LD 1747. The data is evident and the family stories of your Maine constituents are authentic. We can make a real difference by passing this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Hopkins M.Ed CAS  
*Executive Director*

The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf



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