

Donna Irish

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Maine State Legislature  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: Testimony in favor of LD #976

Dear Member of the Committee Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Donna Irish, I am Deaf and live in Unity. I am asking for your support for bill #976. I use voice and sign when I am with medical personal. If I'm emotional I will use my voice. I must have an ASL interpreter for appointments. I do not need one for my primary doctor because they use a clear mask. Other appointments, I do. My primary doctor automatically informs other places I am referred to that I need a live ASL interpreter. I have been trying to get surgery for 2 years.

I use medical services in Waterville, Bangor, Madison, Skowhegan, and Pittsfield. I also use Portland; I do not have issues in Portland. My doctor there retired so I can no longer use them. I have had the following issues:

- Live interpreter not showing up or cancelling last minute and I must postpone my appointment. Often an interpreter will have issues at the last minute and then I will be stuck with no interpreter, sometimes I am not informed at all.
- I always ask in advance if a live interpreter is available, sometimes they cancel last minute, even after confirming. If there is no live interpreter for me, I walk out.
- My primary doctor has already indicated that I need live interpreter, but interpreters will not be there when the appointment comes.
- Doctors' offices will be given advanced notice and tell me they can't find anyone to interpret.
- One time, I called 911 told them to have interpreter ready, I arrived they didn't, so I called the interpreter myself and told them to come.
- I do not like to use VRI because its freezes.

Please contact me if you have any questions. I appreciate your support on bill #LD 976 allowing myself to get the medical services we need.

Thank you for your time,

Donna Irish