

MaineHealth

MaineHealth Local Health Systems

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

Part of the MaineHealth Family

MaineHealth Accountable
Care Organization

MaineHealth Affiliates

MaineGeneral Health
New England Rehabilitation
Hospital of Portland
St. Mary's Health System

Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth In Support of LD 1198, “Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development to Convene a Working Group to Improve the State's 10-year Economic Development Strategy” Tuesday, April 4, 2023

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, I am Sarah Calder, Senior Government Affairs Director at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in support of LD 1198, “Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development to Convene a Working Group to Improve the State's 10-year Economic Development Strategy.”

MaineHealth is an integrated 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. MaineHealth is also the state’s largest private employer with over 22,000 care team members, but, we are facing a workforce crisis that is significantly impacting access to care. We are currently recruiting for over 2,900 positions, in addition to over 55 physicians and 70 advanced practice providers.

In an effort to address the crisis, we have invested heavily in retaining our current workforce, but also in creative and innovative solutions to “grow our own,” including developing entry level employees in front line positions from Environmental Services to training tomorrow’s physicians. It’s clear, however, that legislative action is needed if we’re going to be successful in meeting the increased workforce demands of our state.

In 2019 when the 10-year Economic Development Strategy for Maine was released, we were disappointed to find that health care was only mentioned twice in the report, despite the fact that the health care sector is one of the fastest growing industries in Maine and across the country. And as the oldest state in the nation, Maine’s health care needs are only going to continue to grow. Moreover, the report identified that “Hubs of Excellence” need to have access to “first class hospitals and health care services” in order to be competitive – which we strongly agree with. But in order to have access to high-quality health care, particularly in rural areas, we need to significantly grow our health care workforce.

With that said, we applaud Rep. Sawin Millett for his leadership and sponsorship of this critical legislation before you today. We look forward to working with the Commissioner and working group to improve the State's 10-year economic development strategy by ensuring the state's health care workforce needs and opportunities to grow the workforce are considered.

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