



TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

In Opposition To

[LD 1436](#) – *An Act To Protect Certain Essential Workers from Infectious Disease*

April 30, 2021

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, my name is Jeffrey Austin and I am with the Maine Hospital Association. I am offering this testimony in opposition to LD 1436.

The Maine Hospital Association (MHA) represents all 36 community-governed hospitals including 33 non-profit general acute care hospitals, 2 private psychiatric hospitals, and 1 acute rehabilitation hospital. In addition to acute-care hospital facilities, we also represent 11 home health agencies, 18 skilled nursing facilities, 19 nursing facilities, 12 residential care facilities, and more than 300 physician practices.

Hospitals are already governed by basic requirements to provide workers with appropriate safety equipment. We don't believe another regulation is necessary for hospitals.

Furthermore, this bill would cost hospitals a considerable amount of money, with no means of recouping that cost. If this bill is to go forward, it should include mandates to both commercial insurance and the MaineCare program to provide funds to cover their share of these expenses.

Finally, we believe a much more sensible requirement would be to direct the Maine CDC to maintain an appropriate supply of PPE that could be distributed to whomever might need it. This would be much more cost effective and efficient. If the Legislature is inclined to pass mandates requiring the expenditure of significant resources, it is most appropriate for your mandate to be directed at a state agency.

The CDC has a Public Health Preparedness Program, which has multiple missions including Medical Material Management and Distribution. Further, allocations from the national stockpile go to the state CDC and it would be best to coordinate both of these efforts.

Please vote LD 1436 Ought Not to Pass, or, in the alternative, direct the mandate toward the CDC.