

MaineHealth

Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth In Support of LD 1373

“Resolve, to Reduce MaineCare Spending through Targeted Nutrition Interventions”

Monday, April 29, 2019

MaineHealth Member Organizations:

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

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson 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 support of LD 1373, “Resolve, to Reduce MaineCare Spending through Targeted Nutrition Interventions.”

MaineHealth is Maine’s largest 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. As part of our mission of "working together so that our communities are the healthiest in America," MaineHealth is committed to ensuring that Mainers have access to the right care, at the right time, in the right place. MaineHealth takes its mission seriously, and its local health systems provide access to all health care services, regardless of ability to pay.

Many medical diagnoses, such as inflammatory bowel disease or celiac disease, require specialized nutritional interventions, and can include formula or specific food-based diets. There are growing data supporting the use of medical foods and specialized diets to treat both adult and pediatric diseases, and may avoid medical therapies. For example, exclusive enteral nutrition instead of intravenous steroids for Crohn's disease or a low glycemic diet instead of Metformin for type 2 diabetes.

The legislation before you today takes the first crucial step to allow for the provision of MaineCare coverage for our patients who require targeted nutritional therapy. MaineCare families often tell our gastroenterology providers that they struggle to afford medical foods and formula, which results in poor adherence, worsened health status, and, likely, increased utilization from additional visits, tests, and admissions. Coverage of medical foods has the potential to improve outcomes, and, in some cases, may serve as a viable alternative to pharmacologic therapy.

For those reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1373, “Resolve, to Reduce MaineCare Spending through Targeted Nutrition Interventions.” Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.