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An Act To Waive Tolls on the Maine Turnpike for People Who Are Traveling for Treatment of Catastrophic Illnesses

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 23 MRSA §1984 is enacted to read:

§ 1984. Toll-free travel on turnpike for catastrophic medical reasons

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Catastrophic illness" means an unforeseen, prolonged and extended illness or medical condition, the medical and associated travel expenses of which are not covered by any other state or federal program or any insurance contract.

B. "Free travel" means round-trip travel without charge on the Maine Turnpike for one personal vehicle to transport a resident eligible under subsection 2 to a scheduled medical appointment.

C. "Medically necessary" means prescribed by a physician and reasonably necessary to treat a catastrophic illness.

D. "Unforeseen, prolonged and extended illness or medical condition" means a severe illness or medical condition of a life-threatening nature, the treatment of which is expected to require a series of procedures or therapeutic interventions at regular intervals extending over a period of months, including, but not limited to, cancer requiring chemotherapy or radiation treatments or kidney disease requiring dialysis treatments.

2. Eligibility. Residents of the State traveling on the Maine Turnpike are eligible for free travel when traveling to and from regularly scheduled, medically necessary appointments with medical care providers if those appointments pertain to a catastrophic illness. Free travel under this section is not available for routine visits to medical care providers or to meet transportation needs arising from an emergency, medical or otherwise. Free travel under this section is available only upon approved application.

Reimbursement of expenses incurred prior to application for free travel pursuant to this section is prohibited.

3. Rulemaking authorized. The Maine Turnpike Authority may, pursuant to the Maine Administrative Procedure Act, adopt rules necessary to interpret and administer this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375,

subchapter 2-A. The Maine Turnpike Authority also may develop, adopt, use and from time to time amend forms for use in connection with the administration of this section. The development, adoption, use and amendment of these forms are exempt from the rule-making process.

SUMMARY

This bill allows a person to travel on the Maine Turnpike free of charge if that person is a Maine resident and is traveling on the turnpike for treatment of a catastrophic illness. It is modeled after Public Law 2005, chapter 472, which was enacted last session and allowed free ferry service for people traveling on ferries for treatment of catastrophic illnesses.