

**State of Maine | 131st Legislature**  
**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**  
**Testimony of Dr. Renee Fay-LeBlanc on behalf of Greater Portland Health**  
**March 28, 2023**

Supporting:

**LD 199, “An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program”**

Sponsored by Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Renee Fay-LeBlanc and I serve as the Chief Medical Officer at Greater Portland Health. Greater Portland Health is one of Maine’s 20 community health centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and part of the largest independent primary care network in the state.

I strongly support LD 199 and thank Speaker Talbot Ross for bringing legislation forward that will ensure all Maine residents with low income have access to MaineCare, regardless of immigration status.

I care for many patients who would be positively impacted by this legislation, but I’d like to share just one patient story with you. “M” has been my patient since 2018 and has never had access to health insurance. She had a diagnosis of high blood pressure and diabetes when we met. Both conditions were not well controlled. Despite treating her with inexpensive medications including lisinopril, HCTZ, amlodipine for her high blood pressure, and metformin and glipizide for her diabetes, her chronic diseases were not well controlled. We tried over many months to get her access to other medications, namely labetalol, sitagliptin and a GLP-1 inhibitor, utilizing Med Access programs, GoodRx cards, to no avail. Last year, “M” suffered a stroke which was directly related to her poorly controlled blood pressure. She now has difficulty talking and is paralyzed on one side. She is unable to work or provide for her family. She has been in and out of the hospital several times since her stroke, and her children are missing school in order to bring her to appointments, as she can no longer travel independently. M is just 50 years old. If she had access to medication and her blood pressure and diabetes were well controlled, her life story would be vastly different and her ability to contribute to our community much greater. MaineCare coverage would have made all the difference for “M” and many other patients I care for.

On behalf of Greater Portland Health thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [rfay-leblanc@greaterportlandhealth.org](mailto:rfay-leblanc@greaterportlandhealth.org) with any follow up questions.

Renee Fay-LeBlanc MD FACP

