



Portland Community Health Center dba Greater Portland Health Testimony

In support of: *LD 1955 “An Act To Promote Cost Effectiveness in the MaineCare Program and Improve the Oral Health of Maine Adult and Children”*

Presented by Representative Drew Gattine

Public Hearing, January 27th, 2020

129th Maine Legislature

January 27, 2020

My name is Ann Tucker, and I am pleased to submit testimony in support of LD 1955 ***“An Act To Promote Cost Effectiveness in the MaineCare Program and Improve the Oral Health of Maine Adult and Children.”***

Greater Portland Health is a federally qualified health center in the greater Portland community serving over 12,000 patients. Our mission is to provide high-quality, patient-centered healthcare that is accessible, affordable, and culturally sensitive. Our services include: medical, behavioral health, **preventative dental services**, substance use treatment, chronic and infectious disease management, and psychiatric services. We are committed to ensuring that are patients have access to the health services we provide regardless of their ability to pay. Greater Portland Health offers a sliding fee scale program and we accept Medicaid, Medicare and commercial insurances.

Greater Portland Health provides preventative dental services to adults that are experiencing homelessness at our health care for the homeless location in Portland. In 2019, our healthcare for the homeless location saw 1,682 patients. Of those patients 266 received services from a Dentist and 60 received a cleaning from a Dental Hygienist. If MaineCare members had access to dental coverage we would expect to see an increase in the number of appointments scheduled from other Greater Portland Health service sites.

Our providers see firsthand the negative impact on patients not receiving regular dental care. Lack of dental care can lead to health issues and conditions that are greater than just a lack of oral health hygiene. The ability for over 21 years of age MaineCare members to have access to dental coverage for comprehensive, medically necessary preventive, diagnostic and restorative dental services would positively impact the health of members.

Dr. Renee Fay-LeBlanc, Chief Medical Officer for Greater Portland Health shared, “Improving oral health is one of the goals for Health People 2020, as good oral care is an important part of a healthy life. Oral disease is more likely to develop in patients who do not have access to preventative dental services. Not only does dental disease lead to problems with speaking,

smiling and eating, but it can also lead to significant pain and morbidity. One of the strategies suggested by Health People 2020 is increased capacity for state oral health program to cover preventative dental services.”

Thank you for your time and consideration of supporting ***LD 1955 “An Act To Promote Cost Effectiveness in the MaineCare Program and Improve the Oral Health of Maine Adult and Children.”***

Ann Tucker
CEO
Greater Portland Health