

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Caroline Zimmerman, Director of Child and Family Health at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in support of the amended version of LD 2146, “An Act to Increase Access to Critical Vaccinations.”

MaineHealth is an integrated non-profit health care system that provides a continuum of health care services to communities throughout Maine and New Hampshire. Every day, our over 24,000 care team members support our vision of “Working Together so Our Communities are the Healthiest in America” by providing a range of services from primary and specialty physician services to a continuum of behavioral health care services, community and tertiary hospital care, home health care, a lab, and retail and specialty pharmacy services.

I am testifying in support of LD 2146 and its amendments, which seek to assure access to vaccines available to be ordered through Maine’s Universal Immunization Program. Vaccination remains one of the most effective public health tools for preventing serious illness and protecting vulnerable populations—particularly children, older adults, and individuals with chronic conditions.

This amendment seeks to maintain access to vaccines in the following ways:

- Permit the Maine Vaccine Board to consider recommendations relating to vaccines from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians or the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, when making its annual determination of vaccines that will be available through the Universal Immunization Program.
- Permits the Maine Vaccine Board to request funding from the State to cover vaccines, if federal recommendations or coverage changes.
- Clarifies that a pharmacist licensed in Maine may have immunity from liability if they are administering vaccines according to guidelines recommended by the State or the professional organizations listed.

We would also recommend amending the bill language to include immunity from liability for physicians and other healthcare personnel who vaccinate people under the Universal Immunization Program, following guidelines set by the aforementioned professional organizations.

This amendment provides a foundation for maintaining access to clinically grounded, evidence-based vaccine recommendations for the Universal Immunization Program. The AAP, AAFP and ACOG analyze emerging vaccine data annually to assess safety and efficacy

for their priority populations. Including their research and most current recommendations will ensure access to effective vaccines for individuals who want them.

For these reasons, MaineHealth supports the sponsor's amendment to LD 2146, and requests amending Section 4 to include physicians and other healthcare personnel. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.