Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Sarah Calder, Senior Government Affairs Director at MaineHealth, and I am here to express concerns with LD 1993, “An Act to Expand Home Visiting Services and Provide for Reimbursement Under the MaineCare Program for Perinatal Doula Services and Midwifery Services.”

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 22,000 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 and a lab.

MaineHealth is committed to providing high quality and safe care to our patients, including our smallest patients, and we are very proud to have delivered 4,889 babies in 2021 – or over 44% of all the babies born in Maine. We also recognize the importance of providing supports to new families in the days and weeks after childbirth, and support efforts to increase access to visiting nurse home visits. With that said, however, we have significant concerns with LD 1993 as currently drafted.

Doulas can play a very important role during and after pregnancy and childbirth, as evidenced by the fact that, as of February 2023, 10 states provide Medicaid coverage for their services. Those states, however, require doulas be certified and/or meet core competency requirements. LD 1993 does not require certification or training, and has the potential to require reimbursement for any individual providing physical, emotional, or educational support to pregnant MaineCare members. We would urge the Legislature to consider creating a certification or licensure pathway for doulas before addressing reimbursement.

We also strongly support patient choice of provider for normal and low-risk pregnancies. Our goal is to ensure that women experiencing high-risk pregnancies receive appropriate maternal care to ensure safe and healthy deliveries. It is for that reason that we worked to introduce legislation this Session (LD 1205) to clarify the scope of practice of certified professional midwives and align their scope of practice with state statute. That legislation has been carried over and the Board of Professional and Financial Regulation has agreed to convene stakeholders over the summer and fall to address the concerns raised by both the medical community and the
midwifery community. With that said, it is premature to provide MaineCare reimbursement for midwifery services prior to addressing these concerns.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.