



State of Maine | 131st Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony of Ann Tucker on behalf of Portland Community Health Center Db a Greater
Portland Health
May 8, 2023
Supporting:

LD 1768 “An Act to Update the Alternative Base Year Payment Method for Federally Qualified Health Centers”

Sponsored by Representative Gattine

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Ann Tucker, CEO of Greater Portland Health, 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.

Greater Portland Health has 15 health centers in Portland, South Portland and Westbrook. Our 175 team members provide high quality care to over 13,000 patients. We provide medical, mental health, substance use treatment, oral health, and recuperative care services to members of our community, regardless of their health insurance status or ability to pay. Additional support provided to our patients includes: transportation, interpreting, financial assistance counselors, case management, community health workers and peer support.

We strongly support LD 1768 and thank Representative Gattine and the other cosponsors for bringing this important legislation forward.

We are extremely grateful to the Legislature for the passage of LD 1787 during the 130th Session which supported a collaborative process between DHHS and the health centers to recalculate our rates for the first time in over twenty years. Greater Portland Health, like many others is still being impacted by the effects of the COVID pandemic, workforce shortages, higher salary and benefit expenses, inflation, and increased need for additional primary care access in our community. The rate increase will assist with the financial gap we are facing due to increased costs of providing exceptional care in our community.

To avoid another delay in the future, this bill would require the Department to further update the base year of that alternative system no later than June 30, 2026, and every 3 years

thereafter. MaineCare payments for FQHC services must be increased on a regular basis to reflect the current costs of providing services. Supporting this bill is necessary for the long-term viability of Maine's health care safety net and our FQHCs, who are leaders in delivering innovative and integrated primary care that Maine people need and deserve.

On behalf of Greater Portland Health, thank you for the opportunity to speak about the importance of LD 1768. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at atucker@greaterportlandhealth.org with any follow up questions.

Sincerely,

Ann Tucker

Ann Tucker
Chief Executive Officer