

Mainers for Health Care Leadership Team
126 Sewall Street - Augusta, ME 04330

January 3, 2018

Dear Members of the 128th Legislature,

Happy New Year and thank you for your public service.

We write as people impacted by the health care crisis here in Maine. We have gone without oxygen, avoided treating infections that landed us in the emergency room, become disabled without necessary medical treatments, struggled with medical debt, lost loved ones, and lost work, all because we didn't have health care coverage. We worked together to expand Medicaid not just for our own survival but for all Mainers trying hard to make ends meet and stay healthy.



"People need to have the ability to go to the doctor when they feel something before it becomes an emergency issue, they are out of work, and can't feed their families." -Melissa Stevens, Norway

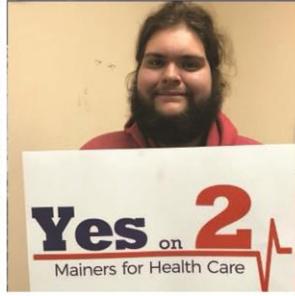


"Finally, people will get the help they need. They'll be able to see the doctor, afford life-saving medication, and live the life they were meant to live." -Kathy Phelps, Winslow

While sometimes difficult to share, we are proud our stories mattered to so many Maine people and that we helped make history with the passage of Question 2 in November. Medicaid expansion is the law of the land and the timeline to implement it is clear. We are grateful to the voters who affirmed our experiences in such a powerful way. Now we ask you, the 128th Maine Legislature, to do the right thing for Maine people. There are families, working parents and individuals, veterans, and older Mainers who desperately need health care. We all know someone marginalized by the health care crisis, who is suffering with addiction or living with mental health challenges, but unable to afford necessary treatment. This law will provide access to health care for thousands of people who have waited too long. Maine has the resources to do this *and* it's the right thing to do. Please join with us to swiftly implement this law.

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Other states have expanded and seen considerable economic benefits that Maine has lost out on. Let's work together to fund our state's share of the cost. It can be done without taking funding from others at risk, including the elderly and the disabled. You can be heroes to the Mainers who desperately need health care, medications, and treatments.

Over 70,000 Mainers are counting on you to be our champions. We've waited long enough for health care. Our bodies feel the impact. We need to see our doctors, to work without pain, to get treatment, and to be there for our children and grandchildren. The whole country is watching Maine. Let's show them how we take care of each other and how we work together to solve problems. We look forward to working with you to make this happen.

If you have a health concern, that could prevent you from going to work which could prevent you from being self-sufficient. It's a cycle." -Pamela Fisher, Sabattus

Sincerely,

The Mainers for Health Care Leadership Team

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Heather Ducharme, Lewiston

Pamela Fisher

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