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State Legislators, Patients, Providers Support Maine's Strong, State Family Planning Network

Committee expected to vote on LD 1613 later this month

AUGUSTA – Maine legislators, patients, advocates and supporters shared their personal experiences demonstrating the importance of high-quality, affordable reproductive health care services in support of [LD 1613](#), Speaker Sara Gideon's bill to fund the state family planning system after the loss of federal Title X funds.

"For many of the 23,000 patients served by Maine's family planning network, this is the only health care provider they will see," said **Speaker Gideon**. "Their clinics are located in parts of our state that already lack doctors and nurses or where an hour drive is the norm to get to an appointment, not the exception. If we fail to support this network, the impact will be felt disproportionately by the very rural communities and Mainers that already face significant health care challenges."

"This bill is deeply personal to me because I relied on these services as a younger woman," **Senator Cathy Breen (D-Cumberland)** told the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services on Thursday. "This is not about some other people in Maine that I'm trying to protect. This is about my life trajectory and the life trajectory of every woman in the State of Maine."

Sen. Marianne Moore (R-Washington) also shared how access to affordable, high-quality family planning care helped her as a younger person. Sen. Moore noted that were it not for the family planning providers in her district, Calais residents would have to drive at least an hour for gynecological care. Family planning is "a critical resource for my constituents—one we can't afford to lose," she said.

The Committee also heard from patients who have relied on family planning providers for gender-affirming, life-changing, compassionate, life-saving health care.

“They truly cared about me,” **Maggie Sahimi** said of the Planned Parenthood providers who diagnosed Sahimi with PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome) after years of mysterious symptoms. “I cannot explain the relief I felt to know why I had been in pain for so long. For years, doctors dismissed my concerns and made me doubt my ability to know there was something wrong with my own body. At Planned Parenthood, they finally put a name to my monster and reassured me that it had never been ‘all in my head.’”

“I can still feel the vivid relief when I was told I qualified for the sliding scale program and my birth control prescription was going to be \$11 a month instead of \$35,” said **Aislinn Canarr**, a former Bangor Family Planning patient. “That \$20 may not sound like a lot, but it was huge as a college student. It is huge for those who struggle to make ends meet. It was the difference between being able to consistently fill my prescription and letting it lapse.”

“I had hated my body my entire life; I have been beaten for it and abandoned because of it, but in that office, in roughly 45 minutes, I was given a future where I could love myself,” said **Sonny Shouse**, a transman, of the gender-affirming care he received at Planned Parenthood. “That’s all it takes to save a life. That’s all it took to save mine.”

Last year the Trump-Pence administration’s medically unethical gag rule forced Maine Family Planning, Planned Parenthood, and other providers out of the Title X program, the nation’s program for affordable birth control and family planning services. The gag rule is opposed by every major medical association in the country including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, and the American Medical Association, which is the lead plaintiff challenging the legality of the gag rule.

LD 1613 would replace lost Title X funds with state funds in order to sustain Maine’s existing family planning network.

The statewide family planning network comprises 50 health centers including 18 Maine Family Planning clinics, four Planned Parenthood of Northern New England health centers, five school-based health centers and 23 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

[Analysis from the Guttmacher Institute](#) found that other types of health care providers lack the capacity to deliver contraceptive and other family planning care to patients who rely on Planned Parenthood and other Title X-funded sites.

State family planning providers offer services regardless of patients’ ability to pay, ensuring equitable access to basic sexual and reproductive health care for all Mainers. The network serves more than 23,000 patients each year, providing contraceptive counseling and supplies, STI testing and treatment, cancer screenings, wellness exams, pregnancy tests and comprehensive options counseling, transcare, and other essential health services.

The Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee is expected to vote on the bill later this month.

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[Maine Family Planning](#) provides reproductive health care at 18 clinics statewide, as well as reproductive justice advocacy and comprehensive sexuality education for all Mainers. For nearly 50 years, MFP served as statewide grantee for Title X National Family Planning Program.

[Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund](#) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit membership organization formed as the advocacy and political arm of [Planned Parenthood of Northern New England](#) in Maine. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) operates four health centers in Maine serving more than 12,000 patients a year and provided more than \$4 million in free and discounted health care.