

The Maine Heritage Policy Center Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 30 “An Act To Improve Health Care Data Analysis”

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Adam Crepeau and I am a policy analyst at The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to testify neither for nor against LD 30, “An Act To Improve Health Care Data Analysis.”

The Maine Heritage Policy Center is neither for nor against this bill because it is currently a concept draft and there is little information about what the consequences of this legislation might be. However, we are in favor of improving transparency to include more health care data through the Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO) website or by allowing individuals to compare prices of medical procedures in Maine. These reforms would certainly improve health care policy in the state.

As a 501(c)(3), The Maine Heritage Policy Center utilizes data that is accessible from state resources to analyze policies that might affect Mainers. These resources include the MHDO, which has an objective to, “create and maintain a useful, objective, reliable and comprehensive health information database that is used to improve the health of Maine citizens.”¹ In other words, we support the collection of health care data and making it accessible to the general public.

The MHDO is indispensable for researchers and the general public because it provides data about health care costs. By making prices for services more transparent, hospitals and specialists would be forced to compete for business. In 2016, we published a report that outlines the price disparity of health care costs in the state. For example, knee replacement surgery in Maine could cost between \$26,743 and \$50,454.² If the public knew they could receive the same service for almost half the cost at another facility in Maine, they would likely do so. According to the Foundation for Government Accountability, health care services are the only large purchases that Americans make without knowing the true cost.³ Thus, any improvements to price transparency in Maine would likely drive prices down because providers would want to remain competitive.

For those reasons, The Maine Heritage Policy Center is neither for nor against LD 30 until the sponsor makes additional information about the bill available at the public hearing. Thank you.

¹ <https://mhdo.maine.gov/index.aspx>

² <https://mainepolicy.org/healthcare-costs-in-maine/>

³ <https://thefga.org/solution/health-care-reform/right-to-shop/>