

## Testimony to the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriation and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services

### Regarding LD 390, The Biennial Budget

By Nicole Evans, United Way of Greater Portland

February 21, 2017

Senator Hamper and Representative Gattine, Senator Brakey and Representative Hymanson, and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Health and Human Services, my name is Nicole Evans, and I am testifying on behalf of United Way of Greater Portland (UWGP). Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on LD 390.

UWGP opposes the proposals to eliminate MaineCare coverage for 19 and 20 year olds, and parents with income from 40 – 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). There is not one fiscal reason to make these cuts, yet both of these proposals will have a significant negative impact on 5,800 young adults and nearly 20,000 working parents.

#### **19 – 20 year olds**

The biennial budget proposes to eliminate MaineCare eligibility for 19 and 20 year olds. Many of the young adults who are currently covered do not have access to their parent’s insurance and do not qualify for subsidies under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Without Medicaid, these low-income 19- and 20-year olds will not be able to afford health insurance on their own.

Additionally, many of the young adults who will lose coverage have chronic health conditions. Without Medicaid, they will not be able to afford ongoing health care. For those young adults who struggle with addiction, loss of coverage will potentially eliminate their access to life-saving treatment.

This proposal will negatively impact the health outcomes of Maine’s future workforce, and will shift costs onto health care providers, insurers, and other Maine residents. Please reject it.

#### **Parents with income from 40 – 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**

The biennial budget proposes to take health insurance away from low-income Maine parents, creating significant negative consequences for these families and their children. The proposal eliminates coverage for parents who have annual income ranging from \$8,064 to \$20,160 for a family of three. These parents cannot afford to purchase health insurance on their own and do not qualify for subsidies under the ACA.

Without insurance coverage, costs for care will shift to hospitals and other providers, who will pass on those costs to others. For example, a professional who works with individuals in Cumberland County reports that because many of her clients do not qualify for Medicaid they have no other choice than to use the emergency room for case management services.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Madden, Ph. D., “The Voice of the Community,” *United Way of Greater Portland* (Fall 2016).  
[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5757120ff85082e5b52038ec/t/588b67da2994ca9f3986079c/1485531099473/Community+Conversation+White+Paper\\_Final.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5757120ff85082e5b52038ec/t/588b67da2994ca9f3986079c/1485531099473/Community+Conversation+White+Paper_Final.pdf).

When parents have health care coverage, their health and access to care improves. Without insurance coverage, parents are less likely to be able to care for themselves, or their children.

When parents are healthy, the likelihood that they will be able to care for their children increases, as does their chances to be more financially secure.<sup>2</sup> Providing parents with health insurance has a significant, positive impact on the long-term future of their children.

United Way of Greater Portland strongly oppose both of these proposals, which will have a long-term negative impact on Maine people and communities. Please reject both of them.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and service.

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<sup>2</sup> “Medicaid Expansion: Good for Parents and Children.” *The Georgetown University Health Policy Institute* (January 2014). <http://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Expanding-Coverage-for-Parents-Helps-Children-2013.pdf>.