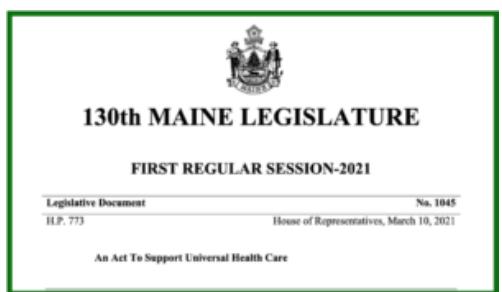




Maine Legislative Initiatives for Universal Health Care

2021: Universal health care bill enacted in Maine

At the end of June 2021, the Maine Health Care Act [LD 1045](#) became law without the governor's signature.



Two key components of the new law are the Maine Health Care Plan and the Maine Health Care Board. The Plan component is *"to provide for all medically necessary health care services for all residents of the State."* The Board's role is *"to oversee the planning and implementation ... and to administer the Plan,"* including obtaining a federal waiver for a state-based plan, and federal financing to support implementation.

It is important to note that many important details and elements of the original legislation were removed from the Maine Health Care Act. And although it was enacted, the law has a contingent effective date so it does not go into effect until a contingency outlined in section 4 of the law happens. That is, the law will not become effective unless: (1) federal law is enacted that authorizes a state to obtain a waiver to establish a universal health care plan and to receive federal funding; and (2) the Superintendent of Insurance provides notice of the contingency to the legislature, the Secretary of State and the Revisor of Statutes. The effective date of the law will be the day that notice of the contingency is received by the legislature.

The legislature also passed a [Joint Resolution](#) expressing the need for universal health care, asking Congress to enact legislation to authorize states to obtain a state universal health care waiver.

This bill and the Joint Resolution are significant, representing the first time the Maine Legislature has taken even this small step in support of universal health care. In addition, LD 1045 and the Joint Resolution were passed by the legislature during a very busy session, when many expected that universal health care would not receive any attention.

A decade of Maine AllCare support for universal health care legislation in Maine

The first universal health care legislation for Maine was submitted in 1993. "An Act to Provide Family Security through Quality, Affordable Health Care" (LD 1285) proposed the establishment of a universal health care system that offered choice of coverage through organized delivery

systems or through a managed care system operated by the Maine Health Care Agency, channeling all health care dollars through a dedicated trust fund.

In 2001, the Health Care System and Health Security Board were established by Maine law. While the purpose of the board was "to develop recommendations to provide universal access to health care coverage for all Maine citizens," it was specifically required "to assess the feasibility and cost of implementing a single-payer health care system in Maine." The Health Security Board engaged the consulting group Mathematica, which completed a fiscal study that demonstrated the feasibility of universal health care for Maine. Since 2002, several attempts have been made to pass legislation to enact universal health care for Maine.

When Maine AllCare was formed in 2010, its first action was to bring Dr. William Hsiao to Maine, where he testified to the Joint Committee on Health Care Reform Opportunities and Implementation on "Taiwan's Health Reforms: Lessons for the USA and Maine."



View Dr Hsiao's testimony on YouTube [HERE](#).

Read Maine AllCare's testimony [HERE](#).

Dr Hsiao also gave a lecture at Bates College on the same topic. View his Powerpoint presentation: [Dr. Hsiao, presentation on Taiwan's Health Reforms 10.16.10](#).



Since 2011, Maine AllCare has encouraged supporters to testify at the Maine Legislature on behalf of universal health care for Maine. On several occasions, dozens of supporters have packed the Health Care, Insurance and Financial Services (HCIFS) hearing room to present and to listen to testimony.

Below is a list with links to legislation and testimony presented by Maine legislators and Maine AllCare supporters between 2011 and 2020.

2011

[LD 57](#): "Resolve, To Update the Study Regarding the Feasibility of Establishing a Single-payer Health Care System," sponsored by Representative Paulette Beaudoin

[LD 1397](#): "An Act To Establish a Single-payer Health Care System To Be Effective in 2017," sponsored by Representative Charles Priest

Amendment: 'Resolve, To Study the Design and Implementation of a Single-payer Health Care Plan That Is in Compliance with the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act'

[Link to Maine AllCare's talking points about LD 1397](#).

(Public testimony for these bills is no longer archived on the Maine Legislature website.)

2013

[LD 1345](#): "An Act To Establish a Single-payer Health Care System To Be Effective in 2017,"

presented by Representative Charles Priest

[Link to public testimony, 46 items](#)

LD 1037: "An Act To Provide Access to Affordable Health Care for All Maine Residents by 2020," presented by Representative Paul McGowan

[Link to public testimony, 1 item](#)

2015

LD 384: "Resolve, To Study the Design and Implementation of Options for a Universal Health Care Plan," sponsored by Senator Geoffrey Gratwick

Committee Amendment to LD 384: "Resolve, To Study the Design and Implementation of Options for a Universal Health Care Plan in the State That Is in Compliance with the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act"

[Link to public testimony, 30 items](#)

LD 815: "An Act to Establish a Unified-payer, Universal Health Care System," sponsored by Senator Geoffrey Gratwick

[Link to public testimony, 12 items](#)

2017-2018

LD 386: "An Act To Establish Universal Health Care for Maine," sponsored by Senator Geoffrey Gratwick

[Link to public testimony, 2 items](#)

LD 1274: "An Act To Promote Universal Health Care, Including Dental, Vision and Hearing Care," presented by Representative Heidi Brooks, sponsored by Senator Geoffrey Gratwick

[Link to public testimony, 97 items](#)

2019-2020

LD 52: "An Act To Provide an Affordable and Accessible Health Care System for all Residents of Maine," sponsored by Senator Geoffrey Gratwick

[Link to public testimony, 47 items](#)

LD 1611: "An Act To Support Universal Health Care," sponsored by Representative Heidi Brooks

[Link to public testimony, 104 items](#)

LD 1617: "An Act To Create a Single-payer Health Care Program in Maine," sponsored by Representative Michael Sylvester

[Link to public testimony, 67 items](#)

2021

LD 1045: "An Act to Support Universal Health Care," presented by Representative Heidi Brooks

[Link to public testimony, 82 items](#)

LD 1608: "An Act to Expand the MaineCare Program to Cover All Citizens of the State, sponsored by Representative Michael Sylvester

[Link to public testimony, 19 items](#)