Greetings Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services:

My name is Jess Maurer and I’m the Executive Director of the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of 75 organizations, businesses and older Mainers working together to make sure we all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age in our homes and communities.

I am writing in support of LD 120 because the establishment of the Office of Affordable Health Care would encourage a coordinated, nonpartisan, and data-driven approach to moderating health care costs which would benefit the people of Maine of all ages. A comprehensive and unbiased examination of health care costs and quality is an essential first step to their improvement. Recommendations for reform based on analysis of Maine-specific data from this nonpartisan office would provide credible and unbiased alternatives for legislative consideration on the difficult and growing problem of rising health care costs.

The Office of Affordable Health Care is also charged with analysis and recommendations to improve consumer experience with the health care system. While people of all ages are consumers of health care services, older adults are more likely to be engaged with the health care system more frequently and extensively than younger people. Older adults would have a great deal to offer and would benefit from efforts to improve systems and make processes more consumer friendly.

An examination of health care costs and quality would inevitably show that affordable HEALTH CARE is dependent on more than just the costs of hospitals, doctor visits, lab tests, and pharmaceuticals. While health care access and quality is one factor that determines one’s health status, other factors --‘social determinants of health’--are even more important. With a solid grounding in data, the Office of Affordable Health would be well-positioned to make recommendations on legislation to build an integrated statewide system of formal and informal
supports that prioritizes low cost/high value interventions to address the critical community needs in our currently fragmented and uncoordinated ‘system.’

We know health care and community supports are in need to transformational improvement to allow all Mainers to live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age in our homes and communities. The establishment of the Office of Affordable Health Care would be a positive step toward that goal.

We urge a vote in support of LD 120.

Thank you.

Jessica Maurer
207-592-9972