



**Testimony of Marge Kilkelly on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Health and Human Services**

**In Favor of LD 167 - An Act to Provide 2 Hearing Aids
to MaineCare Members Diagnosed Hearing Loss**

Submitted March 11, 2025

Greetings, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and the Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am a Policy Consultant for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings.

I am testifying in favor of LD 167-An Act to Provide 2 Hearing Aids to MaineCare Members Diagnosed Hearing Loss

Hearing helps us stay aware of our surroundings and connect to the world- the world of family, friends, music, birds and in Maine ocean waves and a breeze in the trees. These sounds are not a luxury to those who have lost the ability to hear but essential to quality of life.

Hearing is also a safety issue- being able to hear the smoke alarm, the doorbell, or the phone when making a critical call all contribute to health and well-being.

While there are some cases where 1 hearing aid is sufficient, in the vast number of cases audiologists recommend two. Two hearing aids provide a more natural and clear hearing experience. If one ear is deprived of sound the brain has a more difficult time understanding speech.

Research has also linked hearing loss and the risk of dementia. When the brain has to work harder to process sound there is an impact on memory and thinking functions. Further, social isolation as a result of hearing loss often leads to social withdrawal contributes to cognitive decline.

Again, while in some cases only 1 hearing aid is necessary, if both ears are hearing impaired it makes sense to provide hearing aids for both; which improves quality of life for Maine Care members and reduces the need to have repeated visits and evaluations.

I urge you to act in support of LD 167.

Thank you for your consideration.