

Michelle Probert, Director
Office of MaineCare Services
Augusta, ME

October 17, 2019

Re: Rule Making for LD 820

Dear Michelle,

Passage of LD820 was a significant achievement in equalizing access to medical care for women in Maine. You know that access to care is a cause for which I am deeply committed, as I know you are, and access to reproductive healthcare and abortion care is extremely important to the women of western Maine where I live.

Making that real access to care now falls to you.

It is essential that MaineCare cover abortion care in a way that truly facilitates access to all women who need these services. That means that women must be eligible for coverage by MaineCare through presumptive eligibility because abortion care is so time sensitive. And it is critical that it be a covered service under the Limited Family Planning Benefits so that it is available for women under an individual income threshold.

I am reminded of a patient I saw in the ED who was in an extremely abusive relationship. Her abuser had told her he wanted to get her pregnant so that she would never be free of him. She had a positive pregnancy test and knew that she only had the one day when she had the car to get an abortion, or, indeed, she would never be free. She couldn't arrange it that day, he found her, and we never saw her again.

And there were many stories of women who were working parttime in minimum wage jobs without insurance who could not take off more than one day to get their abortion care or who needed to keep their decisions private from other family and needed to be able to access care on the basis of their own income. Coverage under the Limited Family Planning Benefits allows these women to exercise their right to control their reproductive lives free of coercion.

As you know, the roadblocks to true access to healthcare remain many. I hope that DHS in its rule making will be able to truly allow ALL the women of Maine the ability to get reproductive healthcare and abortion care if and when they decide that that is what they need.

Thank you,

Connie Adler, MD