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STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

May 11, 2020

Dr. Lauren Michalakes, Co-Chair
Medical Director of Hospice and
Palliative Care Program
Pen Bay Medical Center
6 Glen Cove Drive
Rockport, ME 04856

Elizabeth Keene, Co-chair
Vice President, Mission Integration
St. Mary's Health System
96 Campus Avenue #321
Lewiston, ME 04240

Dear Co-Chairs,

We are writing to you in your capacity as co-chairs of the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Advisory Council. As you know, the Health and Human Services Committee recently voted Ought Not To Pass on LD 1950, An Act To Advance Palliative Care Utilization in the State. Although the Committee is supportive of the concepts raised during the public hearing and work session on LD 1950, we were concerned that we lacked information or payment models to act on legislation and that the bill, as drafted, did not solve the problems identified. We know there is a lack of palliative care available around the State and we are also aware reimbursement methodologies and shortfalls contribute to the shortfall. We understand that there is a great deal of work taking place at the national level, particularly through the National Academy for State Health Policy, and in other states. We hope to learn from these activities and request your help in this endeavor.

The Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Advisory Council, established in statute, is tasked with a duty to make recommendations to improve palliative care and the quality of life of persons with serious illnesses and to findings and recommendations in an annual report. We are requesting that the Council undertakes a survey of payment models, including interdisciplinary and bundled models, consult with the Department of Health and Human Services, and make recommendations on what would be appropriate for Maine in the next annual report that is due to three legislative committees, including this committee, by January 1st, 2021. Under the joint rules, submitting the annual report grants the authority to the committee receiving the report to report out legislation to the First Regular Session of the 130th Legislature. We look forward to learning from you, having concrete and appropriate solutions, and undertaking legislative action next year. We thank you for your assistance with this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Sen. Geoffrey M. Gratwick
Senate Chair

Rep. Patricia Hymanson
House Chair

cc: Molly Bogart, Director of Government Relations, DHHS
Health and Human Services Committee members
Kandyce Powell, Maine Hospice Council