



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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### FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

April 1, 2013

## **Large Turnout Expected for Public Hearing on Health Care Expansion** *Cover Maine Now! Coalition Will Make the Case for Covering Thousands*

**AUGUSTA** – Cover Maine Now!, a coalition of more than 80 businesses and organizations representing patients, consumers and health care providers, will turn out in force to support legislation that would make 69,500 Mainers eligible for federally funded health care.

[A public hearing](#) will be held at 2 p.m., Tuesday, April 2, to consider [LD 1066](#), “An Act to Increase Access to Health Coverage and Qualify Maine for Federal Funding.”

“Maine has an opportunity to expand access to health care to thousands of people in our community with the federal government paying the lion’s share of the cost,” said Sara Gagné-Holmes, executive director of Maine Equal Justice Partners and one of the coalition organizers. “Accepting federal funding for this expansion will make sure that thousands of people have access to a doctor when they need one, and it will strengthen Maine’s economy through an influx of federal dollars and a more productive and competitive workforce.”

The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Linda Sanborn of Gorham, has support from Republicans, Democrats and Independents in the Legislature.

- **WHAT:** Public hearing on LD 1066, “An Act to Increase Access to Health Coverage and Qualify Maine for Federal Funding.”
- **WHEN:** 2 p.m., Tuesday, April 2
- **WHERE:** The Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, Room 209, Cross Office Building, Augusta

- **WHO:** The Cover Maine Now! Coalition and other supporters of increasing access to health care to Mainers.

Accepting federal dollars already set aside to cover Maine's uninsured will benefit the entire state, reduce the rate of uninsured, and boost the economy.

- **More Mainers Will Have Health Insurance:** Forty percent of the uninsured in this state have incomes at or below 133% of the poverty level.
- **Health Care Costs Will Go Down:** With insurance, people will be less likely to delay the care they need; their overall health will improve; and their need for more costly care will be reduced.
- **Coverage Saves Lives and Improves Health:** A recent Harvard study found that expansions of Medicaid coverage were associated with an improvement in overall health status and a significant reduction in death rates.
- **Charity Care Will Decrease and People with Insurance Will See Rate Relief:** This coverage will keep people out of emergency rooms and dramatically reduce rates of charity care for all hospitals in Maine. The decrease in the cost of hospitals' charity care means there will be less shifting of costs to private payers.
- **Maine's Economy Will Grow:** Millions of new federal dollars will be invested in our health care system, creating thousands of new jobs for our state.
- **Thousands of Uninsured Maine Veterans Will Gain Coverage:** Approximately 2,700 uninsured Maine veterans who do not have health insurance today could be covered in 2014 if Maine accepts these federal funds.

A [recent report](#) by Maine Equal Justice Partners and the Maine Center for Economic Policy found that expanding access to health care with federal funding would add more than \$350 million to Maine's economy and create more than 3,100 jobs in the state.

For a list of coalition members, visit: <http://www.covermainenow.com/coalition-members>

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