**MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

**2023 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

**Co-Chairs: Henk Goorhuis, M.D., and Kevin Fickenscher, M.D.**

The 186 members of the 131st Maine Legislature Conducted their First Regular Session at the State House in Augusta on December 7, 2023. After passing a baseline budget, the First Regular session adjourned on March 30th. The 131st Maine Legislature First Special Session began on April 5th and was finally adjourned for the year *sine die* on July 25, 2023.

Maine’s Governor is incumbent Janet Mills (D). Democrats control both chambers of the legislature. The 35-member Senate is composed of 22 Democrats, and 13 Republicans while the 151-member House includes 80 Democrats, 68 Republicans, and 2 Independents with 1 vacancy. Two physicians are members of the 131st Maine Legislature: Representative Samuel Zager, M.D. (D-Portland) and Jane Pringle, M.D. (D-Windham).

The Maine Medical Association Legislative Committee met every Wednesday 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm. Committee membership includes 33 members of ranging specialties including emergency medicine, internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, anesthesiology, orthopedic surgery, urology, medical students, and medical residents.

Two-thousand and nineteen bills were introduced in the 131st First Regular and First Special Session. The MMA tracked 396 of those bills, and 43 have successfully become Maine Laws. Maine’s physicians and MMA Staff provided nearly 40 pieces of verbal and/or written testimony this year.

# **131st Legislative Results of Note**

The Maine Medical Associations legislative priorities for this session included topics such as increasing access to healthcare (LD [231](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0152&item=3&snum=131), LD[616](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0393&item=3&snum=131), LD[1040](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0676&item=3&snum=131), LD[1159](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1159), LD[1619](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1044&item=3&snum=131), LD[1936](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1244&item=3&snum=131), LD[904](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=904)) reducing administrative burden (LD[1244](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0792&item=3&snum=131), LD[796](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0485&item=1&snum=131), LD[1498](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1498), [LD1766](https://legislature.maine.gov/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280088933)) strengthening laws providing substance use treatment (LD[162](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0103&item=3&snum=131), LD[600](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0377&item=3&snum=131), LD[1052](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=SP0421&item=5&snum=131), and protecting/investing in Maine’s public health infrastructure (LD[1161](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1161), LD[1856](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1186&item=3&snum=131), LD[1722](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=SP0685&item=3&snum=131)).

In this session, we were successful at advocating against restoring the religious and philosophical exemption for vaccines (LD 51) and increasing the statute of limitations for medical malpractice cases (LD 549). We also saw wins in healthcare access expansion, including coverage for supplemental breast screenings (LD 1836) and continued funding for Maine’s Pediatric and Behavioral Health Partnership Program (LD 231).

Over four hundred and fifty bills have been carried over from the First Regular and Special Session to the Second Regular Session in 2024. The large carry-over list will result in a very active Second Session (short session). Of these carry-over bills several pertain to health care including prior authorization reform, bureau of insurance complaint submission process, and expanding access to treatment for substance use disorder.

* **[LD 51](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=51) – Restore Religious and Philosophical Vaccine Exemptions** 
  + *Status – DEAD*
  + MMA Position: OPPOSED
* [**LD 60**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?ld=60&PID=1456&snum=131&sec3) **– 72-Hour Firearms Purchase Waiting Period**
  + *Status – DEAD*
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT
* [**LD 199**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=199) **– MaineCare Coverage for Noncitizen Persons 21 and Over** 
  + *Status – DEAD* – Passed in House but was killed in Senate without debate or roll call vote.
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT
* [**LD 231**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=231) **– Maine Pediatric and Behavioral Health Partnership Program**
  + *Status – Signed by Governor;* [*Public Law 2023, Chapter 339*](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0152&item=3&snum=131)
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT
* [**LD 420**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=353) **– An Act to Fund a Health Program for Medical Professionals** 
  + *Status – DEAD –* \*Intent is to again work directly with the state Department of Licensing
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT
* [**LD 549**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=549) **– Act Regarding a Discovery Rule for the Statute of Limitations for Cases of Medical Negligence**
  + *Status – DEAD*
  + MMA Position: OPPOSED
* **LD 934 – An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Damages Awarded for Wrongful Death**
  + *Status:* [*Public Law – Chapter 390*](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0581&item=6&snum=131)
  + MMA Position: OPPOSE
* [**LD 1323**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1323) **– Act to Amend the Opioid Education Requirements**
  + *Status – DEAD –* Received majority vote to pass from policy committee, unanimous support from the House but died in the Senate due to Democratic opposition.
* [**LD 1614**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?ld=1614&PID=1456&snum=131&sec3) **– Require an Ultrasound and Certain Counseling Before an Abortion** 
  + *Status – DEAD*
  + MMA Position: OPPOSED
* [**LD 1619**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1619) **– An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws**
  + *Status* – [*Signed by Governor – Public Law Chapter 416*](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1044&item=3&snum=131)
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT
* [**LD 1766**](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1766) **– Act to Establish Standards for Health Care Utilization Review** 
  + *Status – DEAD –* \*Intent is to fold the issue into LD796 (prior authorization)
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT
* **LD 1722 – Resolve, to Establish the Blue-Ribbon Commission to Design a Plan for Sustained Investment in Preventing Disease and Improving the Health of Maine Communities**
  + *Status: Public Law* [*Resolve Chapter 100*](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=SP0685&item=3&snum=131)
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT
* **LD 1728 – An Act to Ensure Access to Federally Approved Opioid Overdose-reversing Medication**.
  + *Status:* [*Public Law Chapter 161*](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=SP0692&item=2&snum=131)
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT
* **LD 1836 – An Act Regarding Insurance Coverage for Diagnostic and Supplemental Breast Examinations**
  + *Status:* [*Public Law Chapter 338*](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1168&item=4&snum=131)
  + MMA Position: SUPPORT

**Carry Overs 2024**

* [LD 353](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=353) – Act Concerning Substance Use Disorder, Treatment, Recovery, Prevention, and Education
* [LD 796](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=796) – Act Concerning Prior Authorizations for Health Care Provider Services
* [LD 1215](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1215) – End Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products
* [LD 1498](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=131&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1498) – Create an Advocacy and Complaint Process for Providers Within the Bureau of Insurance
* [LD 1797](https://legislature.maine.gov/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280088958) –Expand Maine's Health Care Workforce, Expanding Educational Opportunities & Providing Tax Credits
* Summary: