



Maine Equal Justice  
People Policy Solutions

## Health care for all means all! MaineCare should cover all Mainers with low income, including immigrants

Last year, immigrants who are pregnant or under age 21 won access to MaineCare. LD 718 would finally close the health care gap for adults.

The pandemic has underlined the reality that **our public health, economy, and community resilience** are tied to each person's ability to get care when they're sick and to prevent or manage chronic conditions that make us more vulnerable to illness.

**Immigrants are the backbone** of many of Maine's biggest and most essential industries, including health care, food production, and hospitality. But **health insurance is out of reach for many workers who have risked their safety and their lives** to keep Maine running throughout the pandemic. In 2020, Maine had the largest racial disparity in the nation for COVID infections among Black Mainers. Disparities in infection rates and deaths persist for Black and Latinx Mainers, many of whom are immigrants.

Immigrants are also leaders in our communities, schools, workplaces, and governments, helping to build a brighter future for all of us. **Immigrants contributed \$193.9 million in state and local taxes in 2018**. On average, those who immigrate to Maine are more likely to have advanced education and start businesses that create or help retain jobs. With our aging population, immigrants play a key role in maintaining our workforce and caring for our elders at home and in long-term care facilities.

### It's time Maine returned immigrants' care

In 2017, **Maine voters resoundingly supported Medicaid expansion**, calling for more affordable health care for all. Today, that popular choice means **critical affordable care for nearly 90,000 Mainers during the pandemic**. LD 718 would be another significant **step toward a health care system that works for all of us**, including immigrants who are our family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers.



"I had MaineCare until the age of 21 and **suddenly found out I was not eligible due to my green card status**. I am a student, I work, and I fulfill my duty as a civilian and pay taxes like everyone.

I suffered through **asthma, depression, and anxiety without getting any help** from professionals because I **could not afford** it. I took my medications in moderation and skipped days when I didn't feel like I could get it refilled.

That is **what many immigrants do** because they do not have health care. People are forced to suffer in silence and make a choice between their health and their bills."

-Chance Isazu, Bangor