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Contact: Cherilee Budrick
207-622-7083 X 205
cbudrick@mainecahc.org

39 Green Street
Post Office Box 2490
Augusta, ME 04338-2490

Tel: 207 / 622 – 7045
www.mainecahc.org

MAINE PASSES NEW DIRIGO FUNDING AND NEW CONSUMER HEALTH PROTECTIONS

Consumer Advocacy Group Joins Governor in Celebrating

(Augusta) Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC) is joining Governor John Baldacci this afternoon at 2:00 in the State House Hall of Flags to celebrate the significant progress made this session to improve Maine’s health care system and to thank those who helped make such progress possible.

The “Governor’s Dirigo Funding Bill” (LD1264) changes how the Dirigo program is paid for. It sets a flat 2.14% assessment of paid claims on insurers to be collected annually rather than a fluctuating amount that could be as high as 4% collected over 27 months as it has been.

“We strongly supported the previous funding mechanism of Dirigo, the Savings Offset Payment (SOP), because it directly linked the actual savings in Maine’s health care system to the program that created those savings—Dirigo. However, CAHC is still supportive of this new funding because it will help to stabilize the Dirigo program and avoid the costly litigations against the SOP brought on by the insurance industry every year. And, by changing it so that the money is collected from insurers annually, a steadier stream of revenue will allow DirigoChoice enrollment to open back up, helping to insure more people who need quality, affordable health care. Access to good care is something critical in this economy with thousands of Maine families making the choice between seeing a doctor or feeding their children,” says CAHC Executive Director, Joe Ditré.

CAHC is also pleased with other important health care measures being considered this legislative session.

The “Health Care Bill of Rights” (LD 1205) was passed by the House earlier this week and is now in the Senate for vote. This bill, sponsored by Representative Sharon Treat, requires that insurers give people more information about their health plans before families are stuck with unexpected health care bills. If people have information about what their plans will cover (certificate of coverage), before they buy the plan or get certain care, they will be able to make the best choices for their families and spend their health care dollars more wisely.

Another initiative on payment reform and transparency of health care costs (LD 1444) already
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passed in both the House and Senate. The new measures combined will require that hospitals, other health care providers and insurers give us more information about the cost and quality of our care and coverage so that we can make better decisions for ourselves and our family.

Consumers for Affordable Health Care is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that has been helping Maine people get quality, affordable health care for more than 20 years.

You can view LD 1264 here:

<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280032311>

You can view LD 1205 here:

<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280032251>

You can view LD 1444 here:

<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280032620>

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For more information or to schedule interviews contact:

Cherilee Budrick, Communications Coordinator- Consumers for Affordable Health Care

207-622-7083

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