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Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

RE: Resolve Chapter 79, LD 20, 126th Maine State Legislature

Dear Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Department is submitting this letter as an update on LD 20 (Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Review the Need for and the Costs of Services that Enable Populations who are Elderly or have Disabilities to Live Independently). This Resolve initially was to increase funding for the State funded Independent Support Services and Program, often referred to as the Homemaker Program.

In order to ensure cost effective and efficient services, the Department is working to develop a new RFP for services provided by the Homemaker Program. The Department will work with the successful bidder of this RFP to prioritize the provision of services among applicants, gain efficiencies in program operation, ensure the maintaining of contact with individuals on the waitlist and establish service districts to target utilization based on the State's income and aging demographics.

The Department continues to explore alternative sources of funding for this service provision although the State's options are limited because homemaker services, as distinct from personal care, are not reimbursable under the Medicaid State Plan. Other reimbursement sources, such as 1915(c) waivers, allow for homemaker as a reimbursable service but also require the member to meet institutional level of care. Generally, individuals serviced on the Homemaker program do not meet nursing facility level of care as eligibility does not require nursing or a need for assistance with activities of daily living.

The Department remains committed to the provision of this cost effective service and continues to explore options, such as an 1115 waiver or a 1915(i) State Plan Amendment that will allow appropriate and cost effective expansion of these essential services. As we develop our biennial budget submission, we are focused on prioritizing resources to ensure Maine's elderly can stay in their homes as long as possible.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Mayhew
Commissioner

MCM/klv