3 July 2018

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine  
State House  
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 192, "An Act to Require Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids."

This bill mandates that beginning in January 2019, all health insurance contracts, including group insurance policies and health maintenance organization policies, must provide coverage for the cost of hearing aids for individuals regardless of age, not just for those individuals 18-years old or younger as provided in existing law.

I veto this bill for two reasons. First, expanding mandated insurance benefits by the state must stop. The health insurance market, not the state, should determine the additional benefits that health insurance carriers decide to include in their policies.

Second, the Maine Bureau of Insurance was not directed to update a study that it completed in 2014 on the same subject. An updated report would have served to forecast the future costs of this expanded mandated benefit. The bill will only serve to raise health insurance premiums for all groups and individuals as health insurers spread the cost of this expanded mandated benefit.

For these reasons, I return LD 192 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor