

Lower Costs, Better Care for Mainers

There is an urgent need to lower health costs, expand coverage, and reduce racial health disparities across Maine. That is why it is essential to ensure critical health care measures supported by President Biden remain in upcoming budget reconciliation legislation, specifically empowering Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices for all Americans, creating a federal solution to close the Medicaid coverage gap, expanding Medicare benefits to include vision, dental, and hearing, and making the premium reductions included in the American Rescue Plan permanent, so Mainers can continue to access low-cost coverage.

Americans support bold action to lower health costs and curb soaring drug prices, with [88 percent](#) in favor of allowing Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical corporations to lower prices. President Biden is committed to tackling these issues head on, demonstrated by his commitment to expanding health coverage through [enhanced subsidies](#), closing the [Medicaid coverage gap](#), and [support](#) for Medicare drug price negotiation.

Mainers depend on affordable health care, expanded access to coverage, and drug pricing reform to live healthy lives. Empowering the federal government to negotiate prescription drug prices would save Americans more than [\\$150 billion](#) at the pharmacy counter and create an additional [\\$500 billion](#) in savings for the federal government that could be reinvested to [reduce premiums](#), [expand Medicare benefits](#) to include dental, vision, and hearing, and close the Medicaid coverage gap in the 12 states that have [refused to accept expansion](#). We must act now.

The American Rescue Plan Has Helped 59,738 Mainers Access Affordable Care

- **Strong Marketplace Enrollment.** Nearly [60,000](#) Maine residents have signed up for coverage through the Marketplace in 2021.
- **Increasing Health Coverage Access For Thousands of Mainers.** The American Rescue Plan has [reduced or eliminated](#) Marketplace premiums for thousands in Maine. Under the plan, [16,300](#) uninsured Mainers are newly eligible for health coverage tax credits and 2,400 individuals have access to coverage with zero dollar premiums.
- **Meaningful Savings On Premiums.** Premium savings under the American Rescue Plan benefit all Americans. For example, a 60-year-old couple with an annual income of \$75,000 will see their monthly premiums drop from \$1,869, to just \$531, saving more than [\\$1,338](#) each month.
- **Improving Maternal Health Access.** For new mothers, the American Rescue Plan has created a pathway to coverage, providing states the opportunity to extend [postpartum coverage](#) under Medicaid from 60 days to 12 months following birth. Maine took action and will [increase postpartum coverage](#) to six months beginning in January of 2022, nine months in July of 2022, and 12 months in 2023.

Lowering Prescription Drug Costs

- **Drug Price Hikes Are Outpacing Inflation.** In 2019, American prescription drug spending soared to [\\$369.7 billion](#), an increase of 5.7 percent, more than [three times](#) the inflation rate for the same period.
- **One Quarter Of Americans Struggle To Access Essential Medications.** [Nearly one in four](#) Americans taking prescription drugs struggles to afford needed medications, with 29 percent reporting not taking medications as instructed within the past year due to cost.
- **Drug Price Negotiation Would Save Billions.** The single most effective measure to bring down drug costs is to empower Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices. Negotiation would save patients more than [\\$150 billion](#) and create [\\$500 billion](#) in savings for the federal government.

- **Reinvestment Of Savings.** When the federal government saves on drug costs, those funds become available to [reduce premiums](#), [expand Medicare benefits](#) to include dental, vision, and hearing, and close the [Medicaid coverage gap](#) in the 12 states that have [refused to accept expansion](#).
- **Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Is Overwhelming Popular.** [Nearly nine in ten](#) Americans support empowering Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices.

Drug Prices In Maine

- In 2019, Mainers spent [nearly \\$22 million](#) in cash on prescription drugs.
- In 2017, [31 percent](#) of Maine residents reported that they stopped taking a medication as prescribed due to cost. Polling has shown that [74 percent](#) of Mainers are concerned about the cost of prescription drugs.
- According to research from West Health, in the last year [more than 200,000](#) Mainers reported that they couldn't pay for a medication that their doctor prescribed.
- [Hundreds of thousands](#) of Mainers have chronic conditions like cancer, diabetes, and asthma that require prescription drugs for treatment and management.
- Mainers overwhelmingly support allowing Medicare to negotiate better drug prices. A 2020 poll from AARP found that [88 percent](#) of older Maine voters were more likely to vote for candidates who support allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices.

Expanding Coverage

- **Millions Nationwide Would Gain Stable Coverage.** [4.2 million](#) uninsured people would gain coverage if the American Rescue Plan's subsidies are made permanent, and millions more would continue to save on health care costs.
- **Permanent Health Coverage Subsidies Would Benefit Older Mainers.** Nearly 60,000 Mainer's selected a plan on the Marketplace in 2021, with older adults between [55 and 64](#) making up more than a third of enrollees. The American Rescue Plan offers [significant relief](#) for older individuals, including those at 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

Expanding Medicare Benefits

- **More than 210,000 Mainers Would Benefit From Expanded Coverage.** Nearly [38 million](#) traditional Medicare enrollees would gain dental, vision, and hearing coverage if Medicare benefits were expanded. Due to lack of coverage, [nearly half](#) of Medicare beneficiaries did not seek dental care in the past year.
- **Medicare Beneficiaries Are 25 Percent Of Maine's Residents.** In 2018, [one in four](#) Mainers were Medicare beneficiaries. Recent reports have found between [47](#) and [64](#) percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not have dental coverage, [74 percent](#) lack vision coverage, and [76 percent](#) go without hearing coverage.
- **Income And Racial Inequity Increase Health Disparities.** Half of all Medicare beneficiaries live on annual incomes below [\\$29,650](#), pushing dental, vision, and hearing coverage out of reach. For

[beneficiaries of color](#) or those living in [rural](#) areas, accessing these essential benefits has become increasingly challenging.

Sen. Angus King Is Standing Up For Mainer's Care

Sen. King Was An Enthusiastic Supporter Of The American Rescue Plan, Providing Relief For Thousands Of Maine Families. King [voted for](#) the American Rescue Plan, historic legislation that includes measures to expand coverage and to dramatically lower health care costs for thousands of Maine families. In addition to providing critical pandemic relief, the ARP lowers premiums for people purchasing coverage through the marketplaces and expands access to financial assistance for more middle-class families. King [praised the law](#), saying that it will “help us save lives, support households, stabilize small businesses, make our virus-strapped communities whole and deliver for our tireless medical and safety professionals.”

Sen. King Supports Efforts To Allow Medicare To Negotiate Drug Prices. Sen. King is a [cosponsor](#) of the Empowering Medicare Seniors to Negotiate Drug Prices Act, legislation which would allow for Medicare to negotiate the best possible price of prescription drugs to cut costs.

Representatives Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden Are Standing Up For Mainer's Care

Rep.s Pingree And Golden Are Part Of The Effort To Expand Medicare Benefits And Lower Prescription Drug Prices. In April 2021, Pingree and Golden signed a [letter](#) with 80 other Democrats urging President Joe Biden to lower the Medicare eligibility age, add dental and vision care and allow the federal government to negotiate drug prices as part of a forthcoming bill.

Rep.s Pingree And Golden Voted For Historic Legislation To Lower Prescription Drug Prices. Rep.s Pingree and Golden voted for the 2019 Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act ([H.R. 3](#)), historic legislation to drastically reduce Americans' prescription drug prices by up to 55% and save taxpayers nearly \$500 billion over the next 10 years. H.R. 3 included the most comprehensive drug pricing reform in American history and the largest expansion to Medicare's benefits in decades.

Governor Janet Mills and Attorney General Aaron Frey Are Fighting For Access And Accountability

Governor Mills Expanded Medicaid, Proving Coverage To Over 70,000 Mainer's. On her first day in office, Governor Mills supported the will of the people, who voted in 2017 for Medicaid expansion by ballot initiative, and signed an [executive order](#) to begin Medicaid expansion implementation. At the end of 2020, [73,900](#) Maine residents were part of the Medicaid expansion enrollment in the state.

Attorney General Frey Is Holding Big Pharma Accountable For The Opioid Crisis. Attorney General Frey has been a [committed advocate](#) in delivering relief for Maine families reeling from the opioid epidemic, stating he would do “everything in [his] power...to combat the opioid crisis and obtain accountability for opioid manufacturers.” Attorney General Frey's tireless work will [bring millions](#) to Maine to invest in “prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts” caused by the opioid crisis.

Sen. Susan Collins Is Part Of The Problem

Collins Opposed The American Rescue Plan And Relief For Tens Of Thousand Of Mainer's

Sen. Collins Voted Against The American Rescue Plan And Relief For Thousands Of Maine Families. Alongside all of her Republican colleagues, Susan Collins [voted against](#) the American Rescue Plan, historic

legislation that includes measures to expand coverage and to dramatically lower health care costs for thousands of Maine families. In addition to providing critical pandemic relief, the ARP lowers premiums for people purchasing coverage through the marketplaces and expands access to financial assistance for more middle-class families.

Collins Has Received Hundreds Of Thousands Of Dollars In Pharmaceutical Contributions

Sen. Collins Has Received Over \$500,000 In Contributions From Pharmaceutical Companies And Executives. Over the course of her career, Susan Collins has received \$530,546 in [contributions](#) from pharmaceutical PACs and executives. During her 2020 reelection campaign, more than \$205,000 in contributions poured in from the pharmaceutical industry.