



July 1, 2025

Senator Cindy Friedman, Chair
Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
24 Beacon Street, Room 313
Boston, MA 02133

Representative John Lawn, Chair
Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
24 Beacon Street, Room 236
Boston, MA 02133

Chairs Friedman and Lawn,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **S.841/H.1371 – An Act to Support Equal Access To Community Care For Older Adults And Persons With Disabilities**. As Executive Director of the MassPACE Association, I am testifying on behalf of the eight Programs of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) in Massachusetts.

PACE is administered by MassHealth and is a Medicaid and Medicare provider of medical care and in-home services for individuals who are nursing home eligible and 55 years of age or older. This unique arrangement ensures that decisions about medical coverage are in the hands of the participant and their health care team and centered around the goal of remaining in the community.

In the last several years, the PACE providers have invested and expanded access to more than 270 Massachusetts cities and towns (with more coming) and serve almost 6,000 participants. Your constituents are assisted by coming to our PACE centers or receiving support services in their homes. Because they see such a robust clinical team, which includes 11 different disciplines, their chronic illnesses are proactively managed. Participants stay out of the emergency room and hospital at better rates. As for nursing homes, 10% of our participants reside in an institutional setting, while the remaining 90%, all of whom are nursing home level of care as certified by the state, are living in their communities.

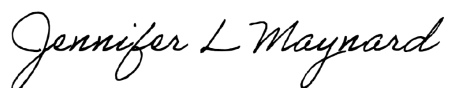
Current MassHealth eligibility requires individuals applying for a waiver just above the income limit to spend down to a level leaving them only \$542 a month to live on. That number was set by the Federal government over 40 years ago and does not reflect the reality of living at home managing housing costs and other daily living expenses. When the spend down applies to applicants in the community, it leaves them only \$542 a month to live on and forces eligible older adults to make the difficult financial decision to choose a nursing home. In most cases, this decision is not what the individual wants and ends up being more costly for the state.

Supporting this bill is the right thing to do for medically frail older adults and makes fiscal sense. It allows PACE applicants to access community-based care by paying what they are over the income limit rather than all the way down to \$542, making community-based care accessible. Since the last time we testified on this bill two years ago, we've had many positive discussions with MassHealth. During his FY26 budget testimony, Assistant Secretary Levine himself expressed support for this change at MassHealth indicating that adopting this policy was reflected in the Governor's proposed budget and is slated for implementation in Spring of 2026.

This issue has recently been further compounded for older adults because of the implementation of the Social Security Fairness Act. As we sit here today, we have older adults that were applying for PACE and qualified financially who, based on a recent small increase in their monthly income, now find the program out of reach for them without a spend down. Passing this bill brings the program back into reach for them and provides security that future changes to policy won't jeopardize their community placement.

I urge the Committee to give this legislation a favorable report. Please let me know if you have any questions about the legislation or the PACE program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer L Maynard".

Jennifer Maynard, DHSc, MPA, RN
Executive Director