

**Comments of Donna Galluzzo, Executive Director, Frannie Peabody Center  
Regarding: 5-Year Renewal Application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS),  
Section 1115 Health Care Reform Demonstration Waiver for Individuals with HIV/AIDS  
Attn: Division of Policy/MaineCare Services  
242 State St. 11 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
Submitted: March 30, 2018**

My name is Donna Galluzzo, and I am the Executive Director of Frannie Peabody Center, Maine's oldest and largest HIV/AIDS service organization (ASO). For over thirty years, we have provided direct services for approximately 2,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. I am writing to express our support for the 5-year renewal application to CMS of the section 1115 waiver for individuals with HIV/AIDS. I would like to thank CMS and MaineCare Services for considering our thoughtful comments as we work together in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Maine.

Maine, a low-incidence HIV state, ranks above the national goal targets for linkage to care and HIV viral suppression. These are key indicators of progress in the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (ref: HIV.gov). There is no doubt that the 1115 HIV waiver has played a significant role in our success statewide to link those who are HIV+ to care and to report strong and consistent indicators of HIV viral suppression. The existence of the 1115 HIV Waiver - which extends limited MaineCare coverage to PLWH (people living with HIV) at or below 250 percent of the FPL – is unique to Maine. Waiver benefits are based on a disease model with the goal to delay, prevent, and reverse the progression of HIV/AIDS, and to date, it can be argued that the waiver has indeed played a significant role in the support of care management (that organizations such as Frannie Peabody provide) to do just that. It's also worth noting that, the waiver has contributed to substantial health benefits while operating well below the budget neutrality permitted under the waiver.

There is clear evidence to show that without care management for those living with HIV/AIDS, a significant number of whom are supported by the 1115 HIV Waiver, those statewide with AIDS-defining illnesses would show significant (and immediate) growth. The services provided by the 1115 waiver directly impact clients' capacity to remain engaged in healthcare and adherent to life-saving HIV medications, thereby drastically reducing the risk of transmitting the disease.

With such clear evidence and such strong outcomes and indicators (and the fiscal benefits of operating below budget neutrality), we are delighted to testify in favor of the 5-year renewal application. For far too long, those at risk and living with HIV have had to fight for their rights to dignity, acceptance, understanding and, especially, quality health care. Living with HIV/AIDS and without access to quality care is a personal and public health issue. The renewal of the 1115 HIV waiver is a significant and reasonable step towards insuring access to and the guarantee of quality health care and care management in community-based and clinical settings statewide.