

# Maine

## 2021 Healthcare Affordability Policy Checklist

### KEY

-  = implemented by state
-  = the state has implemented policies, but could improve
-  = not implemented by state

Polling data repeatedly shows that healthcare affordability is the number one issue that state residents, on both sides of the political aisle, want their policymakers to work on. This checklist identifies areas where Maine is doing well and areas where it can improve.

### 1. CURB EXCESS HEALTHCARE PRICES:

- Implement free, public-facing healthcare price transparency that reflects negotiated rates and features treatment- and provider-specific prices. 
- Create an all-payer or multi-payer claims database to analyze healthcare price inflation, price variation and utilization. 
- Create a permanently convened health spending oversight entity.<sup>1</sup> 
- Create all-payer healthcare spending and quality benchmarks for the state.<sup>2</sup> 

### 2. REDUCE LOW-VALUE CARE:

- Require validated patient-safety reporting for hospitals.<sup>3</sup> 
- Universally implement antibiotic stewardship programs using CDC's 7 Core Elements.<sup>4</sup> 
- Analyze claims and EHR data to understand how much is spent on low- and no-value services.<sup>5</sup> 

### 3. EXTEND COVERAGE TO ALL RESIDENTS:

- Expand Medicaid to cover adults up to 138% of the federal poverty level. 
- Provide high-quality, affordable coverage options for people whose incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid, e.g., Basic Health Plan, reinsurance or augmented premium subsidies.<sup>6</sup> 
- Provide options for immigrants that don't qualify for the coverage above.<sup>7</sup> 
- Conduct strong rate review of fully insured, private market options.<sup>8</sup> 

### 4. MAKE OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS AFFORDABLE:

- Protect patients from inadvertent surprise out-of-network medical bills.<sup>9,10</sup> 
- Limit the availability of short-term, limited-duration health plans. 
- Waive or reduce cost-sharing for high-value services.<sup>11</sup> 
- Require insurers in a state-based exchange to offer evidence-based standard plan designs. 

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Additional detail is available at:

[WWW.HEALTHCAREVALUEHUB.ORG/AFFORDABILITY-SCORECARD/MAINE](http://WWW.HEALTHCAREVALUEHUB.ORG/AFFORDABILITY-SCORECARD/MAINE)

## NOTES

1. ME passed a law in 2021 to establish an Office on Affordable Health Care that would analyze trends in healthcare costs and examine the relationship between cost and patient access to healthcare. The office will convene annual public hearings on healthcare cost trends beginning in 2022.
2. In 2019, ME passed a bill to establish the Maine Prescription Drug Affordability Board, which will develop prescription drug spending targets and recommendations for meeting those targets for drugs purchased by certain public payers. The first report on drug spending targets is due in 2021.
3. Central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) and catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI) are two common forms of hospital-acquired infections. ME mandates reporting for CLABSI, not CAUTI, and the reports are not required to be validated. For more information, see: [https://www.cdc.gov/hai/data/portal/progress-report.html#Data\\_tables](https://www.cdc.gov/hai/data/portal/progress-report.html#Data_tables).
4. 89% of ME hospitals have adopted antibiotic stewardship. For more information, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/stewardship-report/current.html>.
5. In collaboration with the Maine Quality Forum, VBID Health released a May 2020 report analyzing spending on 47 low-value services in the state.
6. ME operates a state-based reinsurance program through a 1332 State Innovation Waiver.
7. ME offers Medicaid coverage to lawfully residing immigrant pregnant women and children without a 5-year wait. ME does not offer coverage options for undocumented children/pregnant people/adults.
8. ME has effective rate review as classified by CMS, but does not incorporate affordability criteria into rate review.
9. ME has comprehensive protections against surprise medical billing. 'Comprehensive' surprise medical billing protections include emergency departments and hospitals, apply to all insurance types, hold consumers harmless/ prevent balance billing and adopt adequate payment standard or dispute resolution process. States with only some of these policies have 'partial' protections. For more information, see: <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/maps-and-interactives/2021/feb/state-balance-billing-protections>.
10. The federal No Surprises Act prohibits surprise medical billing in most plans effective January 2022. However, it does not cover ground ambulances which often result in surprise bills. An analysis by Johns Hopkins University conducted specially for Altarum revealed that 39% of ground ambulance rides in ME charged to commercial insurance plans had the potential for surprise medical billing. Note: ME had a small sample size [1208] compared to other states, so interpret estimate with caution.
11. ME caps cost-sharing for prescription drugs in the fully insured market and limited cost-sharing for insulin to \$35 per 30-day supply in January 2021.



### ABOUT ALTARUM'S HEALTHCARE VALUE HUB

With support from Arnold Ventures and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Healthcare Value Hub provides free, timely information about the policies and practices that address high healthcare costs and poor quality, bringing better value to consumers. The Hub is part of Altarum, a nonprofit organization with the mission of creating a better, more sustainable future for all Americans by applying research-based and field-tested solutions that transform our systems of health and healthcare.

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