

mecasa

MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

January 28, 2020

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

My name is Elizabeth Ward Saxl and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), the organization which represents and serves Maine's sexual violence prevention and response programs. These organizations include:

- AMHC Sexual Assault Services; serving Aroostook, Hancock, and Washington Counties
- Immigrant Resource Center of Maine
- Penquis Rape Response Services; serving Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties
- Sexual Assault Crisis and Support Center; serving Kennebec and Somerset Counties
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services; serving Oxford, Franklin, and Androscoggin Counties
- Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine; serving York and Cumberland Counties, and
- Sexual Assault Support Service of Mid-coast Maine; serving Eastern Cumberland, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Knox, and Waldo Counties.

MECASA initiates and advocates for victim-centered public policy; provides expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners; funds sexual assault service providers; and works to change the public perception of sexual violence. We are here today in support of LD 1948, "An Act To Prohibit, Except in Emergency Situations, the Performance without Consent of Pelvic Examinations on Unconscious or Anesthetized Patients." Many thanks to Representative Doudera for sponsoring this legislation as well as to the legislators who signed on as its co-sponsors.

We support the concept and would like to offer a few thoughts and questions:

- With Trans Mainers (who experience sexual assault at a much higher rate than other individuals) and male-identified individuals in mind, as you consider how to address this issue, please consider expanding the scope to include prostate and rectal exams, as has been done in Maryland.
- In addition, we recommend expanding the applicable scope to the full range of healthcare providers who may perform these exams, including nurses.
- After reviewing the Board of Medicine and Osteopathic Board's joint rule (373 & 383 respectively), it appears the intent of the LD 1948 is at least partially covered. We would be curious about how often these rules have been used and how successfully. In addition, it

appears the Board of Nursing's rules related to sexual misconduct are more limited. Though outside of the scope of bill, we believe that sexual misconduct rules should be more consistent across healthcare professions.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

About Maine's Sexual Assault Service Providers

Maine's sexual violence service providers provide free and confidential services across the state to victims/survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault and those close to them, as well as to individuals who wish to increase their understanding of the issues. Just some of the services include a 24-hour statewide sexual assault helpline, crisis intervention and information, support groups, in-person accompaniment and advocacy through the medical and legal systems, and school- and community-based prevention education. Services are provided for a victim/survivor regardless of when they experienced sexual violence, and regardless of what type of sexual violence they experienced. Types of sexual violence include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment and gender-based bullying, child sexual abuse, elder sexual abuse, stalking, sex trafficking, and sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship.

Call or text the Maine Sexual Assault Helpline at 1-800-871-7741.

Chat on the helpline by clicking here.

Text/chat help available Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm. Phone help available 24/7.