

Good morning. I realize you are no doubt incredibly busy but I wanted to provide both my personal and professional thoughts on LD 295. My name is Kevin Fickenscher, MD – a physician and resident of Kittery. Over the last several decades, I have served as a practicing physician as well as an executive leader in a number of major health care systems. In addition, I served as the Medical Director for one of the original, premier Nurse Practitioner programs in the nation at the University of North Dakota where I served as the Director for the Center for Rural Health. I have been a very strong advocate for Nurse Practitioners throughout my career and absolutely believe they hold a very important role in helping to provide quality, primary care services in the nation.

I am an *ardent supporter of rural health* and have brought that advocacy to Maine where I lived for the last six years. ***I am writing to respectfully ask you to oppose LD 295, the bill to remove post-graduate training and supervisory requirements for nurse practitioners.***

Such a change is equivalent to suggesting that a graduate of medical school is prepared to “practice” following the completion of medical school rather than obtaining additional internship and residency training as is required under current Maine laws! In fact, virtually every primary care physician in Maine does not obtain full decision-making or independent practice authority for patients until completing a minimum of 7 years of training from medical school through completion of residency.

The current law for nurse practitioners requires these providers to be licensed under the supervision of a physician or an experienced nurse practitioner for period of 24 months before moving into unsupervised practice.

“A certified nurse practitioner who qualifies as an advanced practice registered nurse must practice, for at least 24 months, under the supervision of a licensed physician or a supervising nurse practitioner or must be employed by a clinic or hospital that has a medical director who is a licensed physician. The certified nurse practitioner shall submit written evidence to the board upon completion of the required clinical experience.”

The existing policy in represents a sound and prudent approach toward nurse practitioner licensure. LD 295 would dismantle the existing approach and jeopardize the quality of care provided by these important members of the health care team.

Please know that I am writing as an ***ADVOCATE for nurse practitioners***, as a ***former Medical Director*** of a nurse practitioner program, as a ***health care leader*** of major care delivery systems that supported and developed nurse practitioner programs; and, as a ***rural health advocate***. In fact, I am currently working on developing a nurse practitioner program for the Middle East where there is a very significant shortage of primary care providers. From my perspective, nurse practitioners have an essential role as members of the care delivery team – ***BUT, their training must be adequate for supporting independent practice!!*** LD 295 fails this hurdle.

Feel free to reach out to me on my mobile at (617) 386-6924 or on my email at drkevin@creostrategicsolutions.com. Also – Stay well...Be safe!!! Thanks for all you are doing in support of the people of Maine.

Kevin Fickenscher
Kittery

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