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March 8, 2021

I am opposed to passage of LD 295, An Act to Repeal Restrictions That Prohibit Advanced Registered Nurses from Providing Essential Health Care Services.

In 1975 I was a pioneer as one of the first nurse practitioners in the state of Maine, having graduated from a program at the University of Maine, Portland. I practiced as a nurse practitioner for several years in association with a physician and I know that I made a difference in the lives of many of my patients. I was grateful to have had a physician associate for consultation when needed. We were a team.

In or about 1994 when I was in medical school at the University of New England, I was asked by the MOA to write a letter to the state senators the day before a vote against nurse practitioners becoming independent practitioners. I refused to do so, supporting nurse practitioners to become independent practitioners as long as they had an internship with a physician for a set amount of time. Independent practice by a nurse practitioner with his/her own professional liability insurance also allowed physicians to carry less professional risk.

Now I am an osteopathic physician who has a very unique perspective on the advanced practice of nursing. I truly respect that role and know that it is an asset to the delivery of healthcare, especially in the rural state of Maine. However I think that it would be reckless and very dangerous to allow a nurse practitioner fresh out of training to go out into private practice. Just think of the legal problems that could ensue from a suit initiated because of a poor patient outcome - the nurse practitioner would have very little defense when his/her training was reviewed by the legal system.

When I graduated from medical school I had to complete at least one year of internship before I could practice, but instead opted to add a family practice residency of two more years to add to my breadth of knowledge. Even as a new physician in private practice, there were times when I pick up the phone and consult with a more senior physician to get guidance on how to handle a particular situation.

My advice comes from personal experience. I implore you not to put the general public at risk, and to defeat this bill.

Adele L. Carroll, D.O.