

February 15, 2023

Senator Donna Bailey, Chair
Representative Anne Perry, Chair
Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee

RE: Testimony, LD 275 Resolve, to Require the Maine Board of Pharmacy to Review Work Practices and Treatment of Pharmacists

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Health Coverage and Financial Services Committee:

My name is Matthew Marston, I am a resident of Hampden and the Legislative Liaison on the Maine Society of Health System Pharmacists Board of Directors. Today I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Society of Health System Pharmacists, an organization that has more than 300 members statewide and primarily represents individual Pharmacists, Technicians and students who practice in a health-system setting. I am testifying today in support of LD 275.

Health System's in Maine have long provided work environments that support our missions of improving the health and well being of the communities that we serve. Our pharmacy teams place medication safety and the practice of evidence-based medicine as our highest priority both inside and outside of hospital settings. In order to deliver upon this promise, it takes safe working conditions that allow for thorough medication utilization review to take place and thoughtful interaction with our patients and other healthcare providers.

Throughout the pandemic pharmacists have been called upon to do more. Pharmacists have hosted COVID vaccination clinics, implemented point of care testing, been called upon to review patients in order to prescribe and dispense antivirals within the pharmacy for those needing treatment for COVID-19. Pharmacists have proven time and again the value that we can provide our communities and how we can improve convenient access to care. However, all of the work that pharmacists had prior to the pandemic in providing patients with their medications and education surrounding how to take them still needs to be done in addition to all of the new tasks that have been added. These mounting pressures have left communities with reduced pharmacy hours and unexpected store closures from staff leaving their positions creating challenges for Maine residents in accessing their medications.

Reimbursement for pharmacy services both nationally and in the State of Maine have been in a steady decline for years shrinking the margins that pharmacies have to work with despite the increasing demands for services and rising costs both in supplies, cost of pharmaceuticals, and wages for pharmacy technicians in a challenging labor market. This has created extremely difficult work environments for pharmacists working in the retail pharmacy setting that are frequently expected to do more with less. Maine Society of Health System Pharmacists fully supports the Maine Board of Pharmacy conducting an assessment of working conditions in Maine. We would propose amending the bill to allow adequate time to survey licensed pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in Maine by requesting that the report is completed by January 31, 2024 and suggesting that the Board consider providing an online survey for all licensed Pharmacists and Technicians that

can be completed during the renewal of their pharmacy license to maximize feedback from our pharmacy professionals in with a low cost to achieve these results.

Soliciting this information and evaluating these conditions in the context of how the pharmacy profession has changed over recent years will be critical in informing how conditions may be improved in our State to protect the health and wellbeing of our patients and the pharmacy professionals that serve them.

The Maine Society of Health System Pharmacists would be happy to work with the committee in any way we can on LD 275. Please reach out if we can be of service.

Kind Regards,



Matthew Marston, PharmD, MBA, BCPS, BCOP
Legislative Liaison | Maine Society of Health System Pharmacists