

February 16, 2023

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

**RE: Testimony in support of 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 Amy Downing, I am a resident of Smithfield and the Executive Director of the Maine Pharmacy Association. We are a statewide association primarily made up of individual pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and students. Our members are employed by both large national chain pharmacies, health care facilities, compounding pharmacies and Maine-based independent pharmacies. I am testifying today in support of LD 275.

Over the last 3 years, the profession of Pharmacy and the role of Pharmacists has changed exponentially, and our organization changed as well. We went from being an organization best known for providing the required continuing education credits to our members, to being the organization that worked day and night with the Maine CDC and our national partners to provide the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 testing, the Executive Orders that impacted Pharmacy, and eventually the vaccine rollout.

Pharmacists are a critical part of our health infrastructure and the last three years have really brought that to light. In the early days of the pandemic, many doctor's offices closed, but pharmacies remained open. Pharmacists rose to the occasion of helping in this public health crisis of a pandemic and they did that as trusted healthcare professionals in their communities.

We recognize there are added stresses and burnout within the profession of pharmacy but this is true for so many professions, doctors, nurses and dentists included and even outside of the healthcare system, it's happening in our schools with teachers. We do feel like things are getting better than they were two years ago or even last year. And while our association supports conducting a survey by the Maine Board of Pharmacy, we did want to point out there is an ongoing national survey that was recently completed. Maine was included in the data collection, and the results break out specific data related to Maine.

APhA, The American Pharmacists Association, has a well-being index for Pharmacy personnel. They started this survey in April of 2020, and information is collected monthly. They use a measurement known as 'state distress percent', and the higher the percentage, the higher the workplace stress. As of January 6, 2023, as it relates to state distress percent, Maine is the lowest of all 50 states and two territories (52 out of 52) at 18.46%. Nevada is the highest on the list with 60.49% distress level. Additionally, compared to our fellow New England states, as of January 2023, CT is 4<sup>th</sup> highest, MA is 9<sup>th</sup>, NH is 3<sup>rd</sup>, RI is 34<sup>th</sup>, and VT is 35<sup>th</sup>.

We are happy to work with our national partners to access this report and share with the committee ahead of your work session if you would find that helpful. And if we can be a resource in any other way prior to the work session please reach out.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to try and answer any questions you may have.



Amy Downing, IOM

Executive Director | Maine Pharmacy Association