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**May 12, 2023**

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**Testimony of the Maine Association of School Nurses in Support of LD 1837: An Act to Increase Oral Health Services**

**Melinda Nadeau BSN, RN**

**Past President, Maine Association of School Nurses**

[mnadeau@brunswicksd.org](mailto:mnadeau@brunswicksd.org)

Representative Lori Gramlich and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services: My name is Melinda Nadeau and I am the Immediate Past President of the Maine Association of School Nurses (MASN), member of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and a School Nurse at Harriet Beecher Stowe School in Brunswick. MASN represents more than half of Maine's Pre K-12 school nurses. Our mission is to optimize student health and learning by advancing the practice of school nursing.

It is the position of NASN: ***Since school nurses address a wide range of health concerns*** in large student populations in addition to oral health, a one stop location for oral health teaching resources, continuing education resources, and for locating partners and protocols for prevention and treatment programs is needed. Dental caries (tooth decay) remains the most prevalent chronic disease in both children and adults, even though it is largely preventable. Providing Oral Health services for all Maine school children is a necessary measure to help keep students healthy and ready to learn.

I was involved with the Oral Health Program for over 12 years and saw first hand the difference fluoride and preventive teaching helped to improve the student's oral health care. Through this program we were able to catch a student in renal failure and multiple students with dental caries were seen and given the care needed to stop the decay. The Oral Health program also helped families find Dental homes. I have also noted the lack of dental health offices in Maine that will accept Mainecare patients therefore decreasing the equity of student care. Having a trained professional provide preventive screening and fluoride varnish to students in all public schools will provide a much needed service to our Maine children.

For these reasons, MASN urges the committee to vote **to Support LD 1837**. Thank you for hearing the concerns of MASN as we strive to keep Maine students healthy and ready to learn.