



**Maine Medical  
Association**



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
AND  
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION**

**Neither for Nor Against**

LD 377 An Act to Establish a University of Maine Medical School and to Dedicate Funds  
from Raising the Cigarette Tax to the School

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Room 208, Cross Building, Augusta, Maine  
Monday, March 3, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Anne Sedlack, and I am the Director of Advocacy at the Maine Medical Association. I am submitting this testimony neither for nor against LD 377, An Act to Establish a University of Maine Medical School and to Dedicate Funds from Raising the Cigarette Tax to the School.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State. The MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice.

The MMA and the MOA have chosen to take a position of neither for nor against in order to offer a couple of comments to help the Committee during their deliberation.

First, our Associations believe that raising the tobacco tax is an effective tobacco control policy, especially among youth and young adults.<sup>1</sup> Tobacco Control offers a significant

<sup>1</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3228562/#:~:text=There%20was%20strong%20evidence%20that,compared%20to%20the%20general%20population.>

public health benefit, given the well-documented health risks of smoking tobacco.<sup>2</sup> However, revenue produced from an increased tobacco tax should not be used to support one legislative initiative. Instead, it should be spent on public health research and bolstering the general fund to support funding for MaineCare.

Second, the 131st Legislature enacted a Resolve to conduct a feasibility study on whether or not to develop an allopathic medical school to complement the existing osteopathic medical school at the University of New England. [\*Resolves 2023, ch. 114\*](#).<sup>3</sup> The MMA and MOA participated in focus groups this Summer to share our perspective on this issue. During that focus group, we each noted that where an individual completes their residency is often more a determinative factor of staying in the State than where one graduates from medical school. As such, we work alongside the American Medical Association and the American Osteopathic Association to advocate for federal legislation to fund Medicare-supported Graduate Medical Education (GME) slots.<sup>4</sup>

This feasibility study is due back to the legislature in November 2025, and we recommend that this Legislature wait for that report before proceeding. We look forward to being a part of that discussion.

Thank you for considering the thoughts of Maine's physicians.

Best,

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/health-risks-of-smoking-tobacco.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=SP0068&item=5&snum=131>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/more-medicare-supported-gme-slots-needed-curb-doctor-shortages>  
; <https://www.cassidy.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/GME-Reform-Draft-Text.pdf>