



Testimony of Kathleen D. Moneghan, President, Maine Academy of Physician Associates  
In Support of  
LD 651 “An Act to Fund the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program”

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Kathleen Moneghan. I am the President of the Maine Academy of Physician Associates (MEAPA), a Dover-Foxcroft resident, and I practice medicine in Occupational Health and Urgent Care. MEAPA is a non-profit organization that represents PAs practicing in Maine, providing care for Mainers. Today, I am testifying on behalf of MEAPA in support of LD 651 “An Act to Fund the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program.” In 2020, LD 1660, “An Act to Increase Access to Physician Assistant Care,” was signed into law to increase access to care throughout Maine where PAs frequently serve as primary care and emergency care providers in rural areas. This law ensures Maine PAs can practice at the full extent of their training, experience, and expertise, with optimal team practice.

Our state is familiar with the healthcare provider shortage that plagues Maine and the nation. There are over 1,000 PAs practicing in Maine, totaling just under 50% of the physician workforce. In Maine, 45% of PAs are hospital based, while 40% are outpatient/clinic based. On a federal level, PA workforce is growing exponentially; US News and World report consistently list the PA profession as a top 5 profession, with projected 28% profession expansion by the year 2031 (3). The intensity and efficiency of the PA training allows for a more rapid deployment, streamlining access to care issues.

PAs are Master’s and increasingly Doctoral-level trained providers, accumulating several years of significant educational debt. According to the American Academy of Physician Associates, the average cost for a physician assistant program was \$50,567 for an in-state resident and \$61,088 for an out-of-state student. (2). The average student debt following PA school is \$120K, which does not include undergraduate debt.

Maine has experienced many PAs seeking employment in other states due to the high burden of student loans. Many practices are experiencing increased attrition of providers due to the high cost of living and high student loan burden not commensurate with the ability to purchase homes and start families in Maine. Allocation of funds to lessen the significant burden of student loans will support health care providers already practicing in Maine and incentivize new Physician Associates who make up a substantial portion of the healthcare provider workforce, to work in Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kathleen Moneghan, DHA, MPAS, PA-C  
President, Maine Academy of Physician Associates



1. ME LD 1660  
<https://trackbill.com/bill/maine-legislative-document-1660-an-act-to-improve-access-to-physician-assistant-care/1743820/>
2. American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA)  
[https://www.aapa.org/the\\_pa\\_profession/quick\\_facts/resources/item.aspx?id=3839](https://www.aapa.org/the_pa_profession/quick_facts/resources/item.aspx?id=3839)
3. US News and World Report PA Profession Rating  
<https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/physician-assistant>