

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 828

### AN ACT TO ALLOW CHIROPRACTORS TO BE DESIGNATED AS SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORS

March 31, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Eileen King, the deputy executive director of the Maine School Management Association, speaking on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and the Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 828, which proposes that chiropractors be designated as school health advisors under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, §6402-A. While I respect the role of chiropractors in healthcare, research shows that there are significant medical limitations that prevent chiropractors from being suitable for the role of school health advisor, particularly when compared to physicians and nurse practitioners.

Physicians, who are currently included as eligible school health advisors, undergo extensive medical education and training, typically lasting a decade or more. Their education includes comprehensive coursework in human biology, anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and pathology, followed by years of hands-on clinical training. Physicians are fully licensed to diagnose and treat a wide range of medical conditions, perform complex medical procedures, and provide comprehensive care for children and adults alike. In the school setting, physicians are equipped to handle a broad spectrum of health concerns, from routine illnesses and injuries to more serious conditions. This extensive training allows them to address the complex and varied healthcare needs of students, making them ideally suited to serve as school health advisors.

Nurse practitioners (NPs), as mentioned, are highly trained healthcare providers with advanced clinical education that prepares them to diagnose, treat, and manage a wide range of health conditions. NPs can provide mental health support, and offer preventative care, all of which are crucial for promoting the health and well-being of students in a school environment. NPs are trained to manage both acute and chronic conditions, and their work involves close collaboration with physicians and other healthcare providers to ensure comprehensive care.

In contrast, chiropractors focus primarily on diagnosing and treating musculoskeletal disorders, particularly those involving the spine. While chiropractors are trained to assess and treat conditions such as back pain and neck pain, their education does not include the broad range of medical conditions that students may experience in the school setting. Chiropractors are not trained to manage complex pediatric health issues, such as infectious diseases, respiratory illnesses, mental health concerns, or chronic conditions like asthma or diabetes. Additionally, chiropractors lack the depth of knowledge in pharmacology, pathology, and pediatric care that physicians and nurse practitioners acquire through their extensive education.

The role of a school health advisor requires the ability to handle a wide range of health issues and make decisions that are in the best interest of students' overall health. Given that chiropractors are limited in their scope of practice to musculoskeletal issues, they are not equipped to provide the comprehensive care needed in the school setting. Physicians and nurse practitioners, on the other hand, possess the broad medical knowledge and expertise required to meet the varied health needs of students.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose the passage of L.D. 828 and urge you to maintain the current standards for school health advisors. Physicians and nurse practitioners are far more qualified than chiropractors to ensure the health and safety of students in our schools.

American Medical Association (AMA). "How Physicians Are Trained." AMA. Available at: <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/how-physicians-are-trained>

Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). "Physician Training." AAMC. Available at: <https://www.aamc.org/what-we-do/mission-areas/medical-education/physician-training>

American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). "What Is a Nurse Practitioner?" AANP. Available at: <https://www.aanp.org/about/all-about-nps/what-is-an-np>

National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF). "Nurse Practitioner Education." NONPF. Available at: <https://www.nonpf.org/page/NPEducation>

American Chiropractic Association (ACA). "What is Chiropractic?" ACA. Available at: <https://www.acatoday.org/Patients/About-Chiropractic/What-is-Chiropractic>

Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE). "Standards for Accreditation of Chiropractic Programs." CCE. Available at: <https://cce-usa.org/>

Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, §6402-A. "School Health Advisors." Available at: <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-a/title20-Asec6402-A.html>