

Testimony of Colin McClure

In support of LD 1166 “An Act to Change the Professional Title and Identification of Physician Assistants to Physician Associates”.

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Colin McClure. I am currently a student in University of New England’s PA program. Today, I am testifying in support of LD 1166 “An Act to Change the Professional Title and Identification of Physician Assistants to Physician Associates”.

I believe the title change from “Physician Assistant” to “Physician Associate” is necessary to appropriately represent the responsibilities and value of our profession. Over the past year as a student, I have dedicated 90+ hours per week training to not only assist in the medical care of patients, but to diagnose, treat, and ensure the well-being of patients within a team setting. Our current title implies that the role of the PA is to assist the work of the physician. However, PAs are extensively trained to recognize and manage all clinical complaints. I believe the title “Physician Assistant” fails to communicate these abilities to patients. I view this title change as an attempt not to broaden the scope of the PA practice, but rather to help patients better understand our capabilities. From the prospective of a future PA, this is an exciting and important opportunity to maintain the deserved trust of our patients whose understanding of our role may be complicated by our current title. By better communicating our abilities to patients with “Physician Associate”, we, as capable and eager providers, may continue to help mitigate the healthcare staffing shortages in Maine and beyond.

Colin McClure, PA-S