

April 15, 2025

Senator Donna Bailey
Representative Lori Gramlich
Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee
Room 220
Cross State Office Building, Augusta, Maine 04330

Dear Chairman Bailey, Chairman Gramlich and Members of the Committee:

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of LD961, An Act to Address Maine's Health Care Workforce Shortage and Improve Access to Care. Currently I am working in a FQHC in an underserved community as a primary care adult nurse practitioner.

In May of 2019 I graduated from the University of Southern Maine, passed my national board certification exam in early September and began applying for Nurse Practitioner positions. It was a difficult process as I had my degree and national board certification but unable to secure my NP license until I had a job and provided a letter of supervision with a \$50 filing fee submitted to the Maine State Board of Nursing (MSBON). In early December 2019 I was offered a position, submitted my letter of supervision and fee, and waited. My license was not issued until January 31, 2020. This was stressful as I feared I may lose the job offer due to not having my CNP license. On a personal fiscal note- the five month lag time between national certification and MBON licensure certainly cost me a salary increase as compared to a per diem registered nurse hourly wage. The Maine Department of Revenue also lost the increased employee taxes. Removing the required supervision is a no-cost solution to attract NP providers and improve access to health care in Maine.

During the COVID Emergency, Maine suspended all supervisory restrictions without any adverse patient outcomes. The supervision restriction was a barrier for me as an initial licensee and remains a barrier today for other NPs looking to begin practice after meeting all education and national board certification requirements.

LD961 is intended to standardize the Nurse Practitioner licensing process, remove barriers to practice and significantly increase access to Nurse Practitioner provided care for Maine citizens. I urge you to unanimously support LD961, without reservation.

Due to patient scheduling I am unable to be present at today's public hearing. I will make every effort to be available for any upcoming work sessions. I can be reached at dottie.okeefe@gmail.com or 207-239-8138

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy O'Keefe, MSN, AGNP-C
MNPA Legislative Committee co-chair