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Topsham
LD 961

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee. I am Dr. Julie Pease. I live in Topsham, Maine. I am submitting testimony in opposition to LD 961, An Act to Address Maine's Health Care Workforce Shortage and Improve Access to Care.

I have practiced psychiatry in Maine since 1987. My medical education included 4 years studying Life sciences at MIT, 4 years of medical school at the University of Minnesota, 1 year of general medicine at St. Barnabas Medical Center in New Jersey, and 3 years of psychiatry training at the University of Vermont. As a requirement for certification in Psychiatry, I worked under supervision for 4 years after graduating from medical school.

I have 40 years of clinical experience and over the years I have supervised and mentored many nurse practitioners and nurse practitioner trainees, in addition to medical students, interns and residents. In my opinion, based on my experiences, new graduate nurse practitioners do not yet have sufficient clinical experience and expertise to practice independently. We expect our physicians to have at least 3 years of post-graduate, supervised residency training. We should require our nurse practitioners to have a similar period of supervision as well.

While I agree with the sentiment behind the bill, as Maine and the nation are dealing with shortages of medical providers, particularly in rural areas, I do not feel that eliminating the 2-year supervision requirement is a safe or effective way to increase the workforce.

Instead we need more medical residency training slots, and more nurse practitioner training slots, with training programs and student loan forgiveness programs to encourage nurse practitioners and physicians to work in primary care settings, and in the primary care specialties such as pediatrics, obstetrics and psychiatry.

Thank you for considering my testimony.