

State of Maine | 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Testimony of Hannah A. Hudson on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
April 15, 2025

Supporting:
LD 1298, “An Act Establishing Alternative Pathways to Social Worker Licensing”
Sponsored by Senator Talbot Ross

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Hannah Hudson, Director of Policy at Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA).

MPCA is a membership organization that represents Maine's Community Health Centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Maine's CHCs make up the largest independent primary care network in the state, providing high quality and accessible primary and preventive medical, behavioral, and dental health services for over 200,000 people (1 in 6 Mainers) at more than 100 service delivery sites in all 16 Maine counties.

Maine CHC's provide care in rural and underserved areas and have long felt the impacts of shortages in the primary care workforce, including Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs) and other behavioral health professionals. Our communities urgently need qualified social workers to meet the increased demand for mental health support, substance use treatment, and integrated care.

LD 1298 proposes a solution that opens the door for more qualified professionals to enter the field without compromising the standards and rigor of the profession. This legislation allows for alternative pathways to licensure for individuals who are unable to pass the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) exam. These alternative routes maintain high standards while removing the unnecessary bottleneck of a single high-stakes standardized test—a barrier that disproportionately impacts applicants from varied racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, as well as those with learning differences.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 1298. On behalf of Maine's Community Health Centers, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at hudson@mepca.org with any follow up questions.

Hannah Hudson, MA
Director of Policy
Maine Primary Care Association