

Brea Swihart
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LD 961

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 writing today in support of LD961, An Act to Address Maine's Health Care Workforce Shortage and Improve Access to Care.

I have been a Nurse Practitioner in Maine for 14 years. During that time, I have been a preceptor for countless Nurse Practitioner students and a mentor for many new graduate Nurse Practitioners. I strongly support eliminating the significant barrier to practice and patient care that is the supervision requirement for new nurse practitioners.

In my professional experience, the supervision requirement in no way contributes to safer or better practice. In most cases, this practice is essentially a rubber stamp. All new clinicians, whether physician, NP, PA, CRNA, CNM, should have access to colleagues and mentorship; however, mandated supervision is not in any way the same thing. New NPs develop those relationships over the course of their nursing practice, education, and clinical hours, and continue to use those people as their mentors when they start practicing; whereas supervising providers may do no more than sign a piece of paper after 24 months.

Patient safety and quality of care provided by nurse practitioners is consistently high, including in states without supervision requirements, and in our APRN colleagues in Maine who are not subject to this requirement. Nurse practitioners have a comprehensive education and clinical experience that prepares them for full practice upon completion.

Furthermore, the supervision requirement is an impediment to patient access to care. Qualified NPs from other states are reluctant to relocate here and be subject to this requirement. It is a particular barrier for PMHNPs who cannot find a supervisor with exactly the same age range education - preventing expansion of access particularly for pediatric and adolescent patients for whom the lack of psychiatric care is most profound.

Hospitals, primary care offices, and all levels of healthcare are experiencing unprecedented financial strain while simultaneously struggling to staff the most vital positions in primary care and psychiatric care. We must act to ensure that qualified, highly educated professionals are able to provide that care, which they are fully trained to do, without unnecessary impediments that do not improve quality or outcomes and serve only to limit access and availability of care.

It is beyond time to remove the substantial barrier to patient care that is the supervision requirement for Nurse Practitioners. I urge you and your colleagues to act in the best interest of the people of the State of Maine and pass this vital bill.

Sincerely,
Brea Swihart NP-C