



Aspen Ruhlin
Community Engagement Manager
Mabel Wadsworth Center
Bangor, ME 04401

Public Testimony

LD 1688: An Act to Encourage Continuing Education on Infection-Associated Chronic Conditions for Physicians and Nurses

First, I would like to thank the Chairs Senator Bailey and Representative Mathieson, along with the rest of the Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services Committee for reviewing this testimony. My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Mabel Wadsworth Center. Mabel Wadsworth Center is an independent feminist health center that has been providing care in Bangor since 1984. At our center, we provide a wide array of services, including primary care. As a health center that provides care to many living with chronic health conditions, we ask that you vote “ought to pass” on LD 1688.

As the field of medicine advances and diagnostic processes improve, more and more people are recognized as living with chronic health conditions. Along with this increased understanding of chronic health conditions, we have seen increases in infection-associated chronic conditions, such as Lyme disease, other tick-borne illnesses, and Long Covid. While understanding of infection-associated chronic conditions has improved generally, many individuals living with these conditions struggle to find healthcare providers with updated knowledge and training regarding these conditions. This not only leads to frustration for those living with chronic conditions, but also worse health outcomes and delays in access to care that could improve their wellbeing.

Healthcare providers in Maine are essential to our state’s health. They are trained experts who are required to continue their education throughout their careers to ensure their knowledge stays up-to-date with advancements in research. This bill seeks to encourage healthcare providers to include infection-associated chronic conditions as a part of their continued learning. It will amend current law, and



will not create any increased burden on providers. It does, however, have the potential to improve the lives and health outcomes of Mainers across the state. For this reason, we urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1688. Thank you.