

Claire Horne  
Appleton  
LD 1688

Testimony in Support of LD 1688: An Act to Encourage Continuing Education  
Relating to Certain Infection-associated Chronic Conditions for Physicians and  
Nurses

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and honorable members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee. My name is Claire Horne and I am a resident of Appleton, ME. I am writing to testify in favor of LD 1688: An Act to Encourage Continuing Education Relating to Certain Infection-associated Chronic Conditions for Physicians and Nurses.

There are many people in my life and in my community with infection-associated chronic conditions (IACCs), including chronic lyme disease, POTS, MS, ME/CFS, and Long COVID. Many share experiences of being misdiagnosed for long (often critical) periods of time, not having their symptoms taken seriously by healthcare professionals, and/or being given misinformation by healthcare providers. I myself have had experiences where it is a challenge to find an accessible healthcare provider who knows how to take preventative precautions to stop infections from spreading. After a family member got COVID and started experiencing chronic health complications afterwards, I knew I wanted to do what I could to keep them safe from re-infection and also prevent myself from getting sick to reduce my chances of getting chronic health conditions after infection. Currently the only way to prevent Long COVID is to not get COVID in the first place. It is so difficult to navigate the healthcare system - whether it be for emergency services, routine blood work, or specialist visits - while trying to not get infected with a virus or other pathogen that could have debilitating impacts on my health. I can tell that there is a lack of education around infection-associated chronic conditions because I have noticed a lack of support in preventing infections as well as treating the long term conditions they cause. I want accessible healthcare that helps me prevent harmful infections and is ready to help me recover should I get sick. I want this for my community and for my state. We all deserve respectful, dignified care based on the most up-to-date information about under-researched and under-diagnosed conditions. Millions of Americans are impacted by infections that cause infection-associated chronic conditions, and yet IACCs are not covered in medical programs or universities. It is no wonder why the majority of healthcare professionals are not currently equipped to provide accurate, thoughtful, evidence-based information to their patients about infection-associated chronic conditions.

Just as all patients deserve care, physicians and nurses also deserve education about the conditions that are impacting so many of their patients. LD 1688 would encourage physicians and nurses renewing their licenses to use some of their required 100 hours of education to learn more about infection-associated chronic conditions. This could really help expand the knowledge that Maine's physicians and nurses have around these conditions, and could help more Mainers get the care they need.

I ask you to vote in favor of LD 1688, and support the care and well-being of all Mainers. Thank you for your time.

Claire Horne  
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