



Kristen Cloutier

33 Charles St

Lewiston, ME 04240

Phone: (207) 807-1637

Kristen.Cloutier@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

April 30, 2025

Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
**LD 1615, An Act to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for
Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee.

I am Kristen Cloutier, proud representative of House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am here to testify in strong support of LD 1615, legislation that would help address a critical challenge facing our state: a severe shortage of dental health care providers.

Maine is in the midst of a dental care access crisis. The number of dentists in the State has shrunk since 2019, and according to the Maine Dental Association, 57% of Maine dentists are 60 and older. In addition, according to the Health Resources and Services Administration within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, only 27.97% of Maine's adult and pediatric dental needs are being met.

Maine's dental healthcare workforce crisis is particularly acute in our rural communities, where residents often travel long distances for basic dental care or worse, forgo it entirely. Meanwhile, we have skilled foreign-trained dentists living in Maine who possess the expertise and dedication to help, but who are prevented from practicing due to licensing barriers that fail to recognize their substantial qualifications.

LD 1615 offers a practical solution by creating a new category of licensure: the "Adjunct Dentist License." It provides a structured, supervised pathway for qualified dental professionals, particularly those trained outside of the United States, to practice in Maine under the general supervision of a licensed dentist and under a written practice agreement.

After demonstrating their competence through three consecutive years of exemplary practice, these professionals can qualify for standard dental licensure in Maine.

This thoughtful approach ensures both patient safety and professional excellence while expanding access to essential oral health care services. It represents a forward-thinking

workforce development strategy that recognizes the diverse educational backgrounds and experiences of qualified dental professionals.

In our ongoing efforts to address Maine's health care disparities and workforce challenges, LD 1615 is both a logical and essential next step. This legislation will help bring quality dental care to underserved communities while creating career opportunities for skilled professionals who have chosen Maine as their home.

I respectfully urge the committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1615.

Thank you for your consideration.