

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

c/o Office of the Revisor of Statutes

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Support for LD1891 from ME Academy of General Dentistry

Esteemed Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs,

The Maine Academy of General Dentistry (ME AGD), representing over 600 general dentists across the state, strongly supports LD 1891. This legislation reflects a strategic and overdue response to Maine's dental workforce shortage, especially in rural and underserved regions. It aligns squarely with our mission to advance quality oral healthcare through education, access, and sustainable practice models.

LD 1891 provides a multifaceted solution: it offers robust scholarships to Maine-connected dental students, education loan repayment for licensed dental professionals, and targeted tax credits—all tied to service in designated extreme shortage areas. By doing so, the bill removes one of the most significant barriers to recruiting and retaining providers in communities that have gone without consistent access to care for far too long.

The true beneficiaries of LD 1891 are Maine's citizens. This bill will increase access to preventive and restorative dental services, reduce emergency room visits for dental pain, improve chronic disease outcomes linked to oral health, and support family and workforce stability in underserved counties. Every child who can see a dentist without traveling hours, every elder who retains their ability to chew and speak comfortably, and every adult who gets a timely diagnosis instead of suffering silently—that is the real return on this investment.

By including not just dentists, but dental hygienists, therapists, and expanded function assistants, LD 1891 fosters a team-based model of care that is both modern and effective. This comprehensive approach builds long-term resilience into our healthcare system and ensures that quality care is not a privilege of geography, but a statewide standard.

We urge swift passage of this bill as a vital investment in the oral and overall health of all Mainers. The ME AGD is ready to support its implementation and work collaboratively to ensure its success.

The Maine Academy of General Dentistry