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Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1945 - An Act to Clarify Data Collection Processes in Health Care Facilities

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services May 12, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Esteemed Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Madeleine DesFosses, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Maine AAP is a professional organization of 300 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists dedicated to protecting the health of Maine children and adolescents. We are in support of LD 1945, An Act to Clarify Data Collection Processes in Health Care Facilities.

This bill seeks to remedy an oversight of LD 956, An Act Concerning Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Data Collection in Health Care Facilities, which was passed by the 131st Legislature. LD 956 requires healthcare facilities to collect data related to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), in addition to other demographic information. The collection of SOGI data is important in improving patient care, understanding health disparities, and promoting health equity among all communities in Maine. However, LD 956 did not account for the potential privacy and confidentiality concerns that arise when this data is collected for minors under the age of 18.

Requiring healthcare providers to collect information through an intake form related to gender identity and sexuality for a minor may put them in an uncomfortable or confusing position. A minor may not feel comfortable or safe disclosing their gender or sexual identity in a healthcare setting. In addition, data may be skewed if a minor doesn't feel they can be truthful about their gender identity or sexuality.

SOGI data collection is critical to improving health equity and understanding patient populations. LD 1945 allows for this crucial data to be collected, while ensuring the privacy and safety of minors.

We respectfully urge the committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1945, An Act to Clarify Data Collection Processes in Health Care Facilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madeleine DesFosses

Advocacy and Public Health Manager, Maine AAP