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**Re: Support for LD 1803**

To: Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and HCIF Committee Members:

As a nurse practitioner practicing in Maine, I am writing in strong support of LD 1803, legislation that would allow optometrists to practice to the full extent of their education and training. As someone who has experienced the benefits, and challenges, of scope of practice reform firsthand, I know this bill represents a crucial step forward in modernizing and improving our healthcare system.

When nurse practitioners were first integrated into primary care, there was skepticism. Critics questioned whether we could provide the same quality of care as physicians. But over the years, data, outcomes, and patient satisfaction have consistently proven that when healthcare professionals are empowered to practice to the top of their license, patients benefit. Access improves, wait times decrease, and care becomes more collaborative and patient-centered.

What we've seen in the evolution of the nurse practitioner role applies directly to optometry. Optometrists are highly educated professionals, trained to manage a wide range of vision and eye health issues. They are already on the front lines of detecting chronic conditions like through eye exams. Denying them the ability to perform procedures and prescribe treatments they are trained for is not only inefficient, it's a disservice to the people of Maine, especially those in rural or underserved communities.

LD 1803 doesn't ask optometrists to do something they aren't qualified to do, it asks us to recognize what they are already prepared to do. Just as expanding the role of nurse practitioners has strengthened our healthcare system, expanding the role of optometrists will allow for better resource distribution, improved patient outcomes, and a stronger, more adaptable care network.

The future of healthcare is team-based, flexible, and focused on outcomes, not rigidly defined by outdated scopes of practice. I urge you to support LD 1803 and stand on the right side of that future.

Sincerely,

**Meagan Grant, ACNP**

**Nurse Practitioner**

Maine General Health