

Testimony of Rachel Samardak, in support of LD 2088, “An Act to Increase Access to Primary Care Provided by Physician Associates.”

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Rachel Samardak. I am writing to express my strong support for LD 2088, legislation that would modernize physician associate practice in Maine and remove unnecessary barriers to patient care.

I have been practicing as a Physician Associate (PA) since 2019, with much of my experience serving patients in rural and underserved communities. In these settings, access to timely healthcare is often limited by provider shortages, long wait times, transportation challenges, and administrative constraints that do not reflect how care is actually delivered on the ground.

As a PA, I am extensively trained to assess, diagnose, treat, and manage patients across the lifespan. In many rural communities, PAs serve as the primary point of care for patients who might otherwise go without consistent medical access. Requiring a formal practice agreement when a PA is functioning as the principal clinical provider adds administrative burden without improving patient safety or quality of care. Instead, it can delay care, restrict clinic growth, and discourage providers from practicing in high-need areas.

LD 2088 would allow PAs to practice at the top of their license, improve workforce flexibility, and create parity with nurse practitioners – all while maintaining high standards of care and accountability. This change would directly support faster access for patients, strengthen rural clinics, and help Maine remain competitive in recruiting and retaining healthcare providers. It would also position our state to qualify for additional federal funding through the Rural Health Transformation Program. I see firsthand how regulatory barriers impact real people – patients waiting weeks for appointments, traveling long distances for basic care, or delaying treatment altogether. Removing unnecessary restrictions will help ensure Maine residents receive timely, reliable care close to home.

I respectfully urge you to support LD 2088 and help advance policies that strengthen access to healthcare across our state. Thank you for your time and for your service to the people of Maine.

Rachel Samardak, PA-C