

Testimony of Cecilia Pinter, MPAS, PA-C

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 Cecilia Pinter. I am a Fort Kent resident, and I practice medicine in the Saint John Valley. Today, I am testifying in support of LD 2088 “An Act to Increase Access to Primary Care Provided by Physician Associates.”

I have over 25 years’ experience as a family medicine physician associate (PA) employed at a federally qualified health center in Aroostook County along the Canadian border. In the past year, my colleague, a physician had retired after 30 years of providing primary care services. Our local hospitals have several physicians leaving this spring and our referring hospitals are all experiencing provider shortages. Where in the past, referrals especially urgent ones would be seen in a timely fashion, it has become commonplace for these referrals to be scheduled in upwards of a year or more and even declined.

When measured by median age and the percentage of the population over the age of 65, Maine ranks as the oldest state in the nation. Our population needs access to quality healthcare in a timely fashion. In Aroostook County, many of my patients are geriatric population and carry multiple medical comorbidities including such things as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, in addition to behavioral health diagnoses. As you may be aware, behavioral health and family medicine are interwoven and even more so in an area with limited resources such as mine. It’s not unusual for my daily patient panel to consists of one-third to a half of my patients having a psychiatric diagnosis.

Access to a physician is becoming harder to come by while the needs of our patients are only increasing. LD 2088 would allow Maine PAs the opportunity to provide health care to the top of their licensure and capabilities. It would allow me to extend my services in primary care and psychiatry and of utmost importance, it would expand access to health care in Maine where the need is great.

You have the opportunity to do something tangible to help make healthcare more accessible for rural patients, and easier to deliver for PAs like me who so desperately want to meet their needs. Please vote “ought to pass” on this important legislation.

Thank you

Cecilia Pinter, MPAS-PA-C