

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee,

I am testifying in support of LD 2088. My name is Angela Leclerc, I am a resident of Gorham, a Physician Associate, and am the daughter-in-law of Ronald and Kathy Leclerc. I have been married to their son, Jason, for 25 years and have been a part of their family for almost 30 years. When I began my clinicals as a PA student 22 years ago, my family practice clinical was in Ronald and Kathy's town of Jay. This was the same family practice clinic where Ron and Kathy had been cared for by Dr. Michelle Knapp for over a decade. She was the quintessential town doctor. During my rotation with her, she shared how uncommon it was for her to go to church or to the grocery store without patients stopping her to say hello or to update her on their latest ailments. This type of dedication to the community was one that provided exemplary care and continuity to patients with chronic and acute illnesses.

Now, over 2 decades later, Dr. Knapp has retired and the clinic has transitioned to more of a revolving door of providers, many just there for 3-6 months. I had been coaching my father and mother-in-law to ask the right questions when he saw a new provider at almost every checkup to make sure that they were working in a longitudinal manner to improve their blood pressure and blood sugar control.

Unfortunately, in January 2025, he suffered a life changing stroke that left him with moderate aphasia and right sided weakness. Following his hospitalization, he needed a provider who would see him regularly, become familiar with his post-stroke needs, whether it was medication or therapy, and truly invest in him as a person, to regain as much physical, emotional and cognitive strength as possible. My husband and I wanted him to have a provider who knew him, grew to know my mother-in-law and understood what was important to them as well as the challenges they were facing in rural Maine with limited access to rehabilitation and other resources.

It was at this time last year that I reached out to my friend and classmate, Madelyn Besse, PA-C. Madelyn moved to Industry following graduation 21 years ago, grew her family and laid down roots. She has been a pillar in the healthcare community and the familiar provider that patients grow to know and love. She agreed to take on my father-in-law as a new patient. My in-laws called me on their way home from his first appointment to share with me how genuinely interested they felt Madelyn was in caring for them. They articulated they hadn't felt that way since Dr. Knapp and could breathe a sigh of relief that Madelyn would be there for them for years to come.

We appreciate Madelyn and the care she provides for Ronald. We hope she will continue to care for him for years to come. We are concerned she may be a solo practitioner if the practice were to lose their physician provider and her practice may be limited due to the practice agreement requirement. Madelyn and many experienced PAs in primary care carry their own patient panel, providing all aspects of care independently. We appreciate her and other PAs who are providing true continuity of care and therefore better health outcomes in rural areas of Maine.

Thank you for your time and considering this important opportunity to increase access to PAs in primary care.

Sincerely,  
Angie

