

Testimony in Support:

LD 2088 “An Act to Increase Access to Primary Care Provided by Physician Associates.”

Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee

DATE: February 3, 2026

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Stephanie Podolski. I am a Brunswick resident, and I have been practicing medicine for over a decade in Augusta, Maine. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 2088, “An Act to Increase Access to Primary Care Provided by Physician Associates.”

I am writing to urge your support for legislation that modernizes PA practice in our state and removes unnecessary barriers that limit access to care, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

The PA profession was created as a public health solution during a time of profound physician shortages, with the explicit goal of expanding access to safe, high-quality medical care. Since then, PAs have become an integral part of the healthcare workforce, practicing in primary care, emergency medicine, behavioral health, and numerous specialties. Across Maine, PAs care for patients in clinics, hospitals, and community settings where access would otherwise be limited or delayed.

Mainers deserve timely access to healthcare close to home. PAs are trained in the medical model, practice evidence-based medicine, and work collaboratively within healthcare teams. Decades of data demonstrate that PAs provide care that is high-quality, cost-effective, and well-received by patients. Yet despite this, current practice barriers prevent experienced PAs from starting or leading primary care practices, especially in rural communities that are already struggling to recruit and retain physicians.

These barriers do not enhance patient safety. Instead, they limit innovation, discourage clinicians from remaining in Maine, and leave communities without reliable access to primary care. As a result, patients are forced to travel long distances, delay care, or rely on emergency departments for routine medical needs.

Modernizing PA practice is not about practicing in isolation; it is about allowing qualified, experienced PAs to practice to the full extent of their education and training, while continuing to collaborate with physician colleagues as appropriate. Removing outdated restrictions would allow PAs to open and sustain primary care practices in communities that urgently need them, strengthening Maine’s healthcare infrastructure and improving health outcomes statewide.

As a healthcare provider, healthcare leader, educator, and Mainer, I strongly believe that supporting this legislation is an investment in access, equity, and the long-term health of our state. I respectfully encourage you to support this bill and to stand with the healthcare professionals who are committed to caring for Maine’s communities.

Thank you for your service to Maine communities and for your thoughtful consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Podolski, DMSc, MPH, MS, PA-C  
Brunswick, Maine