

Testimony in Support of LD 2071 and LD 2146

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Esteemed Representatives Cluchey, President Daughtry, and Honorable members of the Committee of Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to address this committee.

My name is Christine Cattan, I reside in Eddington, Maine and I have been a registered pharmacist practicing in the state of Maine since 1997. I am a member of the Maine Pharmacist Association as well as a Member of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists. I currently work as a Long-Term Care (LTC) Consultant Pharmacist at Bangor Drug Long Term Care in Bangor, Maine.

I am submitting this written testimony in support of **LD 2071** and **LD 2146**. These bills represent a proactive and responsible approach to public safety and preventive healthcare in the State of Maine. As a licensed pharmacist practicing in Maine, I regularly encounter barriers that delay or prevent timely access to vaccines. Passage of this legislation would meaningfully reduce those barriers and improve access to immunizations, particularly for Maine's most vulnerable populations, including rural residents, older adults, and individuals residing in long-term care facilities.

Maine is facing a growing shortage of primary care providers that directly affects access to preventive healthcare services. According to the Cicero Institute, Maine is projected to be short of 120 primary care physicians by 2030, and 13 of the state's 16 counties are currently designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (source: [ciceroinstitute.org](http://ciceroinstitute.org)).

Expanding the authority of licensed pharmacists to administer vaccines would help address this access gap while reducing administrative and clinical burden on primary care providers. Under the current system, pharmacists must request a provider order for certain vaccines, typically via fax or telephone. This process often results in delays of 72 hours or more, even for routine immunizations.

Licensed pharmacists are trained, regulated healthcare professionals with extensive experience in vaccine administration, storage, patient assessment, and counseling. Their effectiveness was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when pharmacists played a critical role in direct vaccination access statewide.

Maine continues to face challenges related to vaccine hesitancy and declining immunization rates. Clear, consistent, and accessible vaccination services are essential to maintaining population-level immunity. Recent measles outbreaks in other states, and a confirmed case in Penobscot County, highlight the importance of timely access to routine immunizations and rapid public health response. Measles was nearly eradicated in the United States due to effective vaccination policy, and continued vigilance is necessary to prevent resurgence.

Rural and underserved areas of Maine experience significant barriers to healthcare access. Pharmacists are among the most accessible healthcare providers, with extended hours and locations embedded in local communities. Allowing patients to receive vaccines at pharmacies without unnecessary delays would improve access, particularly for working adults and rural residents.

In long-term care facilities, pharmacist-led vaccination programs have demonstrated high effectiveness. The facilities I serve consistently exceed state and national vaccination averages, and during the COVID-19 pandemic achieved a 99% acceptance rate. On-site vaccination reduces transportation barriers, improves compliance, and ensures timely protection for vulnerable populations. Pharmacists are trained, regulated, and experienced in vaccine administration, storage, patient screening, and education. Their role during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated their ability to safely deliver vaccinations at scale while maintaining continuity of care. Leveraging this existing workforce is a cost-effective way to improve public health capacity without creating new programs or infrastructure.

Pharmacists routinely review patient records and identify gaps in immunization histories. Expanding access to the Maine Impact system would allow pharmacists to further support coordinated, accurate vaccination tracking and improve continuity of care. Currently, pharmacists must submit vaccine recommendations to providers for approval prior to administration and insurance billing, adding delays without improving patient safety.

Expanding pharmacist vaccination authority and access represents a practical, cost-effective policy solution that leverages existing healthcare infrastructure, improves access to preventive care, and supports Maine's overburdened primary care system. This approach aligns with workforce realities, public health goals, and patient preferences for timely, convenient care.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support **LD 2071** and **LD 2146**. Expanding pharmacist authority to administer vaccines and increasing access to vaccines approved by the Northeast Public Health Collaborative will improve timely access to preventive care, reduce unnecessary barriers for patients, and make more efficient use of Maine's healthcare workforce. This legislation represents a prudent investment in public health, patient safety, and community resilience, and will help ensure that all Maine residents—particularly those in underserved and rural areas—have reliable access to essential vaccinations.

Thank you for receiving my perspective on these bills. I strongly urge you to vote ought to pass on both LD 2071 and LD 2146.

Thank you to the Honorable members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services for your dedicated service to the State of Maine and for your thoughtful consideration of this important legislation.

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