



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

TREATING OUR FAMILY AND YOURS



TO: Members of the Maine House Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services

FROM: American Osteopathic Association
Maine Osteopathic Association

DATE: February 18, 2026

SUBJECT: SUPPORT for ME LD 2200

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) write today to express our strong support for ME LD 2200. This bill would prohibit employers from entering into, enforcing, or threatening to enforce a noncompete agreement with a health care professional. By implementing this measure, Maine will be able to attract and retain more physicians in high-need specialties and/or areas, ensuring that patients are able to access high-quality, timely healthcare regardless of their location or ability to pay.

As a medical professional association representing more than 207,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students (OMSs) nationwide, the AOA works to promote evidence-based policies and sound public health practices that advance the overall health and well-being of patients across the country. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

Collectively, our organizations represent DOs who practice across nearly every specialty and care setting. In recent years, our members have begun reporting increasing challenges resulting from consolidation across the healthcare landscape, regardless of specialty and whether the consolidation stems from private equity-backed acquisitions of private practices, mergers and acquisitions of hospitals and health systems, or consolidation across payers. Each of these forms of consolidation has implications for care quality, access and timeliness of care, workplace safety, and physician burnout. Our organizations are concerned that anticompetitive practices (such as noncompete agreements) will only become more common as consolidation trends continue, catalyzed by payment policies that incentivize certain acquisitions and delivery of services in higher-cost sites of care. Meanwhile, inadequacy of payment for physician services has created a challenging environment for small and independent practices to keep their doors open, further driving consolidation and decreasing access for patients.

Proponents of noncompete agreements claim that they are necessary to prevent health care professionals from leaving and taking a job with a nearby competitor, and there is little room for prospective employees to object or negotiate. In reality, however, **many noncompete agreements are overbroad in terms of geographic distance and/or the length of time that they apply, and force health care professionals who leave their employment to relocate outside of the restricted area or practice outside of their specialty.** Not only does this create hardships for providers and their families, but it also disrupts continuity of care for patients, forcing them to seek a new provider in areas that may already be underserved.

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In light of Maine's ongoing physician shortage, such clauses in contracts are especially problematic. According to the Robert Graham Center, **Maine will need an additional 120 primary care physicians by 2030**,¹ a finding corroborated by the Cicero Institute². Further, the Cicero Institute also found that **13 out of 16 of Maine's counties are designated health professional shortage areas (HPSAs), and more than 85,000 Maine residents live in an HPSA**. This is further compounded by the fact that **almost 40% of Maine's physicians are currently within retirement age**³. To meet the projected demand, Maine must produce and/or attract more physicians than it currently has, and continuing to allow noncompete clauses in healthcare provider contracts runs counter to these efforts.

The AOA and MOA urge you to support timely, accessible care for all patients by supporting LD 2200. Should you need any additional information, please contact Raine Richards, JD, Vice President of State and International Affairs at r-richards@osteopathic.org.

Sincerely,



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President, AOA



Kathryn Brandt, DO
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¹ See <https://www.graham-center.org/content/dam/rgc/documents/maps-data-tools/state-collections/workforce-projections/Maine.pdf>

² See <https://ciceroinstitute.org/research/maine-physician-shortage-facts/>

³ Ibid