



Northern Light Health
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**LD 2206 An Act Expanding Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path
for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry
Testimony in Support
February 24, 2026**

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson, RN, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations at Northern Light Health. I am submitting testimony in support of this bill on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations. Northern Light Health member organizations include 9 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers, with nearly 10,000 employees statewide.

Northern Light Health
Acadia Hospital
AR Gould Hospital
Blue Hill Hospital
CA Dean Hospital
Eastern Maine Medical Center
Home Care & Hospice
Maine Coast Hospital
Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Sebasticook Valley Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Northern Light Medical Transport
& Emergency Care
Northern Light Pharmacy
Northern Light Work Health

Like most hospitals in Maine, Northern Light Health members are challenged with inappropriate utilization of our emergency rooms by individuals seeking care for dental/tooth pain. Patients generally present with cracked teeth, abscesses, dental caries or tooth eruptions, leading to thousands of emergency room claims for dental related diagnosis codes each year. Our primary care practitioners are also challenged with patients presenting for medical visits for dental related conditions.

Northern Light Health has previously testified in support of creating the MaineCare dental benefit to address insurance coverage as a barrier to accessing dental care. However, we know that patients are still facing challenges when it comes to accessing the care they need due to dental workforce shortages. This legislation would help address existing workforce shortages, ensuring that more patients receive dental care and reducing inappropriate emergency room utilization and primary care visits for dental conditions. Cost effective care in the right setting at the right time is an outcome we can all support.

We thank the sponsor for bringing this bill forward and ask that you support this legislation.

Thank you.