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Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the HHS Committee:

My name is Mariah Pfeiffer and I work as an RN in Labor and Delivery at Central Maine Medical Center. I wanted to share a little bit about my experience during the downtime after the cyberattack and the impact it's had on our community and, truly, on our state. I've been a nurse for 15 years and I still feel a bit anxious walking in the hospital doors - you never know what will greet you that day. When I walked in during downtime it felt triply that way. When all the systems we depend on are not working, you feel like the ground beneath you isn't stable anymore.

Most nurses have never experienced downtime or have only experienced it for an hour or two and when it has been planned ahead of time. Staff and providers expressed frequently that it felt like working during COVID all over again, the same level of confusion, working harder and inventing new systems to complete the same work, and not knowing when the ever-changing and confusing environment will end.

Downtime brought up a number of safety concerns. In labor and delivery, we rely heavily on electronic fetal monitoring that you can see both in patient rooms and out in the nurses station and at each computer - when that is not functioning, as the nurse in the patient room you are the only one able to see your patient's fetal monitoring, and it makes it much more difficult to have the collaborative care that we rely on for patient safety. Much like the emergency room, patients may arrive unannounced and so uncomfortable you have little time to ask questions and get a full medical history - and it was a slow and limited process to find patient's medical history on HealthInfoNet. Finally, patient records from the downtime were scanned into patient charts after the fact, but scanning records in was a slow process - and our newborns were being seen at pediatric practices without having an available medical record because it hadn't been scanned in yet creating risk in pediatric care.

As a community, patients took note of this downtime and some transferred to other hospitals - we lost the trust of our community. On top of that, we were initially told that the impact wasn't very large, maybe a few thousand people affected. However, lately we were told that the downtime at both Lewiston-Auburn healthcare institutions affected over one third of the state's population - this wasn't just a minor breach, this will have lasting statewide impacts. We felt alone during this experience - it felt like the rest of the state left it up to us to deal with it on our own, and that we had no information about what was actually going on while it was happening.

Having systems and a plan in place to help support hospitals experiencing these attacks and to better communicate with the public will bolster community trust and help avoid another experience like the one we endured. I urge you to support LD2013 so we work together as a state to support our healthcare systems, it's what Mainers deserve.