

Testimony of Dr. Katelyn Pierson, DMD

LD 2209

Resolve, to Direct the Department of Health and Human Services to Develop Innovative Models for the Delivery of Dental Services to Expand Access to Oral Health Care Throughout the State

In Support

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Distinguished Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee:

My name is Dr. Katelyn Pierson, and I am a general dentist practicing in Biddeford, Maine. I grew up in Saco and chose to earn my dental degree at the University of New England so I could build my career here and serve Maine families.

Maine faces real access challenges in oral health care. But we must be clear about the problem we are solving. Maine has a distribution problem—not a lack of dentists overall. We have added many new providers in recent years. Expanding access should not mean weakening licensure standards.

LD 2209 offers a better path forward.

Unlike proposals that alter licensure requirements, LD 2209 focuses on delivery models and infrastructure. It expands access without lowering standards, preserving the educational and clinical requirements that protect patient safety.

This bill recognizes that rural Maine cannot always support full-time, stand-alone practices—particularly for specialists. A hub-and-spoke model allows care to be distributed efficiently while maintaining consistent oversight and quality. Services can be extended into underserved communities while leveraging established hubs with full clinical capacity.

LD 2209 builds on resources that already exist—UNE, federally qualified health centers, mobile clinics, and other community-based programs. It strengthens infrastructure rather than creating a new licensing tier.

Importantly, this resolve brings stakeholders to the table. By directing DHHS to work collaboratively with dentists, educators, regulators, and public health experts, Maine can develop thoughtful, sustainable solutions that avoid unintended harm.

Workforce development is also a critical long-term strategy. Expanding residency programs and training opportunities—particularly in pediatric dentistry and oral surgery—has been

shown to improve provider retention in-state. LD 2209 supports exploration of these proven strategies.

The contrast is clear:

LD 2206 is a shortcut that changes licensure standards.

LD 2209 is a structured plan that improves access through innovation while protecting patient safety.

Maine families deserve safe, high-quality dental care delivered by well-trained professionals. We can improve access without compromising standards.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 2209 as the safer and more sustainable path forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Katelyn Pierson, DMD