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30 Association Drive, Box 190  
Manchester, ME 04351  
207-622-3374

[www.maineaap.org](http://www.maineaap.org)

## Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 2082, An Act to Regulate the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Providing Certain Mental Health Services

### Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services February 17, 2026

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Esteemed Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Madeleine DesFosses, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Maine AAP is a professional organization of 300 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists dedicated to protecting the health of Maine children and adolescents. We are in support of LD 2082 as amended by Representative Kuhn, which seeks to regulate the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in mental health care and protect patient safety.

When patients seek mental health services, they are most often looking for care from a compassionate, empathetic, and knowledgeable provider. AI may not only be incompetent at providing mental health care, but can also be harmful and dangerous, putting the safety of patients at risk. In fact, [research from Stanford University](#) examining multiple AI therapy chatbot models found that these chatbots can contribute to harmful mental health biases and can produce dangerous, inappropriate responses. The study also found that newer and bigger models still presented the same issues as the older models.

With a shortage of mental health providers in Maine, AI therapy chatbots may seem like a tempting solution. However, AI is not a replacement for the level and depth of care that is provided by an actual trained professional with the ability to use discretion. Pediatric patients seeking mental health care are in an especially vulnerable position and require providers who can provide treatment in a sensitive, compassionate manner. At this point, the risks of AI therapy chatbots to patient safety far outweigh any possible benefits. We cannot allow for patients to essentially be experimented on in hopes that AI therapy chatbots become less harmful and more effective over time - putting the mental health and lives of patients at risk.

I would like to share the thoughts of Dr. Erin Belfort, a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist in Portland, Maine. When asked about her thoughts on the use of therapy provided by AI, Dr. Belfort shared:

Many mental health professionals are concerned about AI's impact on youth mental health. We are in the midst of a well documented youth mental health crisis and it is indisputable that access to trained mental health professionals is a barrier for many unable to receive care. However, trusting the health and well-being of our youth to untested and unproven AI would be premature and shortsighted.

These apps are developed by technology companies that design them to hold viewers' attention—at the cost of their privacy and well-being—to generate profit for shareholders. Emerging concerns exist regarding inherent biases in algorithms and the potential for AI chatbots and companions to offer harmful advice. These technologies are not yet substitutes for human relationships and the evidence based treatment offered by licensed mental health professionals.

**We urge the committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 2082 as amended by Representative Kuhn.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madeleine DesFosses  
Advocacy & Public Health Manager  
Maine AAP