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Good afternoon, committee members and thank you for considering this bill. I moved to Maine in 2009 and prior to that practiced as a naturopathic doctor in Oregon for over a decade. In Oregon I had a DEA number and could prescribe any medications, including scheduled drugs. I probably prescribed testosterone about a dozen times during my years of practice in Oregon. A DEA number carried with it a significant fee, however, I paid for a DEA number for the convenience of my patients so they would not have to go elsewhere if they needed testosterone as a part of their hormone replacement therapy. When I moved to Maine, Maine had a much more limited scope of practice- in order for my patients to get testosterone or other common medications I had prescribed in Oregon, like metoprolol, I would have to send them to a nurse practitioner or back to their primary care physician for another visit. Often my patients did not have additional primary care providers because they had either just lost their provider, due to retirement or moving, or they had moved to Maine from elsewhere and the wait for a primary care provider was over a year. In that case I would need to send them to the hospital for an emergency room visit or to an urgent care facility, although urgent care facilities weren't very prominent until just the last few years. Not only was this costly for the patient, it was costly for insurance companies, and it impacted the emergency room and urgent care from having the bandwidth to address care that was, in fact, more urgent. Either way, it was always more time, more cost and more of a hassle for my patients. I graduated from Naturopathic Medical School in Oregon in 1993 and have been practicing for over 30 years. I felt well prepared in both my schooling and my clinical rotations to be able to prescribe medication in a way that was safe, effective, and took advantage of best practices for care. Our formulary in Maine is woefully overdue for an update in order to provide best practices for our patients and to avoid delayed care and increased costs. I urge you to approve the rules as written.

Thank you,

Dr. Deb

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