

**LD 224 An Act to Strengthen Maine's Health Care Workforce by Preventing
Discrimination by Requiring Maintenance of Certification for Insurance
Reimbursement**

**February 9, 2023
Testimony in Opposition**

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN. I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations speaking in opposition to this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 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 over 12,000 employees statewide.

Northern Light Health is one of the largest employers of physicians in Maine with over 800 employed doctors. Our credentialing standards require physicians to obtain and maintain medical specialty certifications to provide care. We realize that this bill focuses on insurance carriers and their standards for certification. While we believe that our hospitals, credentialing criteria and medical leaders determine qualification to provide services, on the standard of certification for purposes of insurance coverage we agree with the carriers.

Specialty board certification protects the public in ways that are different from licensure. A medical license is the minimum requirement that all physicians must receive in order to practice medicine. Licensure does not differentiate between areas of practice. Board certification is focused on the physician's specialty and the rigor of the certification process provides the public with a standard for advanced training and experience to qualify as a physician specialist.

The American Board of Medical Specialties is a national leader in physician specialist certifications. Their report issued in 2021 documents that there were 949,928 individuals with an active board certification in one or more of the 40 specialties and 88 subspecialties in the United States. Each physician met the following standards:

- Graduation from Medical School
- License to Practice Medicine

Northern Light Health
Acadia Hospital
A.R. Gould Hospital
Beacon Health
Blue Hill Hospital
C.A. Dean Hospital
Eastern Maine Medical Center
Home Care & Hospice
Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Northern Light Laboratory
Northern Light Pharmacy
Sebasticook Valley Hospital

- Residency
- Board Certification
- Subspecialty Exam and Certification (after completing a subspecialty fellowship)
- Continuing Certification

Continuing Certification continues through out the physician specialist career and involves ongoing education and knowledge assessment, quality improvement for clinical practice, and standards of professionalism.

The 2021 report issued by the American Board of Medical Specialist documents that 4,274 physicians in Maine met the standard for specialist certification. While not the only specialist certification organization, the American Board of Medical Specialists is the leading certification organization. Here is a link to the annual report for more information. <https://www.abms.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ABMS-Board-Certification-Report-2020-2021.pdf>

The risk we see in the legislation before you today is the cascading effect that could occur once Maine law prohibits carriers from requiring certification for insurance payment for services. This creates a pathway forward to split the physician providers into two sectors, those employed by hospitals and health systems will continue to meet the certification standards and another sector of physicians that care for our population meeting only the entry into practice licensing standards. This is why we oppose this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this important legislation.