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Northern Light Laboratory  
Northern Light Pharmacy  
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## **LD 223 Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Its Rules Regarding Pharmacy Services**

### **Testimony in Support February 15, 2023**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human 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 support of this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include ten hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, eight 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 Home Care & Hospice has worked closely with the Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine on the positive clinical impact that in home pharmacist consultation would have supporting both our patients and their health care providers. I want to begin by sharing the history on this bill.

In 2018 Maine voters rejected the citizen initiated universal home care referendum. During this time we heard many powerful stories of need for services and positive experiences with home health care. In our opinion the referendum failed due to the funding mechanism, given the overwhelming support for care at home. Understanding this support the Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine members worked together to draft legislation to modernize the home care benefit. In home pharmacist consultation was and continues to be a critical component of modernizing services.

Northern Light Health has experience with in home pharmacist consultation with our Community Care Team that was created as part of the Patient Centered Medical Home initiative. Our community care team worked with pharmacy students from Husson University to provide in home consultation for complex poly pharmacy management. Here is an example of our success:

- Often in home pharmacy reviews allowed directed discussion with providers related to discontinuing medications that might be less efficacious and/or dosing requirements were too complex for patient adherence. These

discussions often led to an easier and more effective (due to adherence and less risk) medication plan.

Understanding the benefit the Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine has successfully advanced two legislative bills that include pharmacist home consultation. The bills had many sections of policy/recommendations that led to a fiscal note that was not funded by the Appropriations Committee. The bill before you today I solely focused on pharmacist consultation for MaineCare funded home care patients.

In preparation for the hearing today I reached out to my colleagues at Northern Light Home Care & Hospice for nursing feedback on patients we have in care today that would benefit from pharmacist consultation. Here are two of the examples they provided me.

*My Patient's medications are a mess, and he has had so many hospitalizations and medical oncology visits. Pill bottles everywhere and the VA case manager arranged an appt for him to go to a pharmacist appointment, but he has to go by regional transportation. He would have really benefitted from a pharmacist telehealth visit. Better yet, the pharmacist visit him at home.*

*Many of our patients have very long lists of medications and would benefit from review of medications with pharmacist to minimize medication lists. Long lists can be overly complicated for patients and not only would they benefit from review for minimizing redundancies but also would benefit from thorough review of medications by the pharmacist with patients for patient education.*

Maine is not alone in identifying the benefit of in-home pharmacy consultation. I have attached to my testimony an article published in the journal - Home Healthcare Nurse, which describes program success for the Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency as they developed an in-home pharmacist consultation service providing strong benefit to their patients.

The bill before you today directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend rules in specific sections of home care policy in order to allow for reimbursement for a pharmacist to provide medication evaluation or consultation to a MaineCare member via telehealth or in a home visit when technology is not the most effective mode of consultation. The department will establish a reimbursement rate for the consultation. The home care providers will then contract for pharmacist services and bill for this care. While we cannot comment on behalf of the department we believe this is the most efficient way to establish this service.

Thank for you the opportunity to speak in support of this important legislation.