



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier introducing
**LD 2043, An Act to Add the State of Maine to the Compact for Licensing
Physician Assistants**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Good afternoon Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee, my name is Kristen Cloutier and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. Today, I am pleased to present *LD 2043, An Act to Add the State of Maine to the Compact for Licensing Physician Assistants*.

First, a little about the PA Licensure Compact: it's an interstate occupational licensure compact which seeks to enhance the portability of a license to practice while safeguarding the safety of patients. This is simple and straightforward – similar to the several interstate licensing compacts your committee has supported in the past. To refresh your memories, interstate compacts are a constitutionally authorized, legally binding, legislatively enacted contract among participating states. States joining the compact agree to recognize a valid, unencumbered license issued by another compact member state via a compact privilege, which is equivalent to a license. In terms of the PA Licensure Compact, licensed PAs utilizing the compact will be able to obtain a privilege in each compact member state where they want to practice.

A few things to remember:

- PAs using a compact privilege to practice in another state must adhere to laws and regulations of practice in that state and are under the jurisdiction of the state's regulatory board in which they are practicing.
- PAs who hold an active, unencumbered license in a compact member state can use the compact to practice in other participating states, provided that the practitioner:
 - Has graduated from a program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. or other programs authorized by commission rule;
 - Holds current National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants certification;

- Passes the background checks and any jurisprudence exams in the states where they want to practice, if required;
- Does not have a disqualifying criminal history; and
- Does not have any limitations or restrictions on any license or Compact License in the previous two years.

Passing LD 2043 is an exciting opportunity for Maine. One of the reasons I brought the bill forward in our “short” session is that I recognize the prospect Maine has as being one of the first seven states to join, giving our state the chance to ensure systems and structures that effectively meet our unique needs as a rural state and best serve our communities. PA interstate compact legislation has been passed in three states so far (Utah, Delaware and Wisconsin) and is pending in several others this legislative session including Washington, Nebraska, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Vermont and New Hampshire. The PA compact will take effect once seven states have enacted the authorizing legislation. We have a chance at having one of those first seven seats at the table to influence the implementation of the compact itself.

The other reason I chose to move this bill forward is because of Maine’s worsening health care workforce crisis. Unlike some other states, Maine law recognizes PAs as separate from physicians when it comes to liability and maintains a collaborative relationship between the two, versus a supervisory one. Our laws allow PAs to practice more easily to the top of the license and education and creates a pathway for PAs to practice solo as long as they have a formal arrangement with a physician for consultations. This makes our state a very attractive one for PA practice. By joining the compact, it will become that much more enticing for these qualified clinicians to move here and provide much-needed healthcare to Mainers.

I’m happy to answer any questions you may have, but I also know there are others who will be testifying after me that may be better able to address the details of this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.