

**Testimony in support:
LD 2043 "An Act to Add the State of Maine to the Compact for Licensing
Physician Assistants"**

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the committee, my name is Kathleen Moneghan, and I am the Vice President of the Maine Association of Physician Assistants (MEAPA), a resident of Dover-Foxcroft. I practice clinically in my hometown of Dover-Foxcroft, as well as in Millinocket and Bangor.

As the former Associate Medical Director of ConvenientMD's Virtual Urgent Care Service line from 2020-2022 I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2043. When COVID pandemic hit this New Hampshire based Urgent Care organization, I was tasked with creating a telehealth platform that would sustain revenue for their brick and mortar centers located throughout Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts; telemedicine became the answer. Our telemedicine volume quickly surged and at our height we served over 1,800 patients daily. Our 50 providers as well as an entire locum provider group with an additional 30 providers, all obtained emergency licensure in each of the three states, this simplified emergency path to licensure helped our providers quickly rise to the challenge of managing the surge while also increasing patient access to care from providers who were spread across multiple state. The emergency licensure function allowed us to rapidly hire and onboard these providers with relative ease, quickly and efficiently. We found telemedicine allowed for improved access to care in previously untreated remote areas of Maine. Additionally, we found telemedicine particularly useful in our home bound or immunocompromised patients, for whom travelling to an appointment was painful and/or dangerous during the pandemic.

When COVID volume began to wane, we needed to rapidly re-deploy staff back into our brick and mortar locations to ensure we remained operationally and financially sound. New workflows were needed to cope with these transitions, which were cutting edge, saved jobs, and provided support where it was needed in all three states. These strategies were of particular importance in the more remote and historically understaffed states like Maine. ConvenientMD continues use these telemedicine and the surge plans we put in place to decrease patient wait times, increase patient satisfaction and combat the urgent staffing challenges on the ground.

Unfortunately, as the pandemic drew to a close and their emergency licenses expired, each of our PAs had to undertake the costly and time-consuming task of again obtaining licensures in multiple states. This delay, while awaiting their additional state licenses resulted in a decrease in their respective volumes, but more importantly a decrease in patient access via both our telemedicine platform and at our urgent care centers creating staffing crises. This was less of an issue for those providers whose professions already had interstate compacts.

An interstate compact for PAs would greatly improve their ability to service Maine patients virtually and in person at our clinics throughout the state. For patients in rural areas, telemedicine may be the only option, especially in winter months when travel may be difficult. An interstate compact, would also have the added benefit of decreasing PA burnout by eliminating the duplication of efforts in the multi state licensure process.

Thank you.