

Maine Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MAINE

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Executive Committee

President
Laura Blaisdell, MD, MPH, FAAP

Vice President
Brian Youth, MD, FAAP

Treasurer
Christopher Motyl, DO, FAAP

Secretary
Genevieve Whiting, MD, FAAP

Immediate Past President
Deborah Q. Hagler, MD, MPH,
FAAP

Board of Directors

Mahmuda Ahmed, MD, FAAP
Joseph Anderson, DO, FAAP
Amy Buczkowski, MD, FAAP
Melissa Burch, MD, FAAP
Adrienne Carmack, MD, FAAP
Gabriel Civiello, MD, FAAP
Anne Coates, MD, FAAP
Alyssa Goodwin, MD, FAAP
Dan Hale, MD, FAAP
Jessica Iyer, MD*
Jennifer Jewell, MD, MS, FAAP
Stephanie Joy, MD, FAAP
Emily Keller, MD, FAAP
Alton Kremer, MD, PhD, FAAP
Michele LaBotz, MD, FAAP
Maria Libertin, MD*
Lawrence Losey, MD, FAAP
Valerie O'Hara, DO, FAAP
Gita Rao, MD, FAAP
Sydney Sewall MD, MPH, FAAP
Austin Steward**
Jeffrey Stone, DO, FAAP
Mary Tedesco-Schneck, PhD, NP
Andrea Tracy, MD, FAAP
Jyotika Vallurupalli**

*Resident Board Representatives

**Medical Student Representatives

Staff

Dee Kerry, BSEd
Executive Director

Emily Belanger, RN, BSN
Project Coordinator

Tiffany Harrington, MBA
Development Director

30 Association Drive, Box 190
Manchester, ME 04351
office: 207-622-3374

www.maineaap.org

March 5, 2024

Subject: Testimony in Support of LD 227, "An Act Regarding Health Care in the State"

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and distinguished members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, my name is Joe Anderson. I am a resident of Portland, a pediatric hospitalist in Lewiston, and I serve on the board of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am here to express our strong support for LD 227, "An Act Regarding Health Care in the State." This proposed legislation protects patients seeking either medically necessary gender-affirming care or reproductive health care services, as well as the health care practitioners and those assisting in the provision of these services. We believe that this legislation is critical for safeguarding the health and well-being of individuals in our state and upholding their rights to access essential healthcare.

Across the country, some state legislatures have taken hostile positions toward patients and their physicians when it comes to transgender or reproductive healthcare. This bill will establish that access to gender-affirming and reproductive health care services, when authorized under the laws of Maine, is a legal right, and interference with this access is against the public policy of our state.

In addition to protecting the availability of these services within our state, this bill introduces provisions to deter hostile litigation against doctors engaged in or aiding these protected health care services. It would also ensure that public agencies in Maine, including law enforcement, would not cooperate in investigations in other states against individuals engaged in legally protected health care. It would require that subpoenas related to legally protected health care activities are carefully reviewed by the court, and the rights of individuals are protected, prohibiting search warrants related to investigations into legally protected health care activity.

Regrettably, health care providers who provide gender affirming care and reproductive health care services have been the target of harassment and even violence in other parts of the country. This bill aims to protect our health care providers, allowing practitioners engaged in legally protected health care activity to participate in the Address Confidentiality Program administered by the Secretary of State.

This bill would also extend protections similar to those provided for reproductive health care services to health care practitioners who provide gender-affirming health care. This includes protections against professional discipline, restrictions on clinical privileges, and termination of contracts by health care plans based solely on engaging in or aiding legally protected health care activity.

We believe that the proposed legislation is essential for ensuring that individuals in Maine have unimpeded access to gender-affirming care and reproductive health care services, and that health care practitioners can provide these services without fear of unwarranted legal consequences. By protecting these rights, Maine can set an example for upholding the principles of patient autonomy, non-discrimination, and access to necessary medical care. It will also send a message that medical decisions are to be made between a patient and their physician, and that patient privacy should always be held in the highest regard.

Thank you for considering our testimony in support of this crucial legislation. We appreciate your dedication to advancing the well-being and healthcare rights of the residents of Maine. We are available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Joe Anderson, DO, FAAP
Advocacy Chair, Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics