



MAINE'S LEADING
VOICE FOR HEALTHCARE

TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

In Support Of

LD 2267 – An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission Regarding Foreign-trained Physicians Living in Maine to Support International Medical Graduates in Securing Employment

March 19, 2024

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Sally Weiss and I am here on behalf of the Maine Hospital Association. MHA represents Maine's 36 private acute care, psychiatric, and rehabilitation hospitals.

I am here today to express our support for LD 2267. As you all know, healthcare workforce shortages continue to be a challenge across the state of Maine and impact every facet of care. While progress is being made with direct investments in training, recruitment and retention, the growing demand for services from our aging population combined with an aging workforce has resulted in a demand for workers that outstrips supply. I believe this will continue for years to come.

Individuals who completed their medical training outside of the United States but are currently living in Maine because of immigration or asylum face difficulty converting their clinical education and experience into Maine's healthcare workforce, despite wanting to do so. The challenges are numerous, such as difficulty translating various educational and training experiences into U.S. healthcare occupations, licensing exams and certification requirements that don't mirror their own, lack of clinical experience and exposure to the U.S. health system, immigration status, and cultural and communication barriers, to name a few.

LD 2267 would provide the support and infrastructure for people living in Maine with foreign clinical training and experience to address these barriers and create pathways to join Maine's healthcare workforce and provide care to their communities. By providing access to educational loans through FAME and creating assistance and readiness programs in tandem with clinical pathways, Maine could leverage the skills and knowledge—along with the desire and interest to stay in Maine—of international medical or clinical graduates to meet the healthcare workforce needs of our state. While we do not expect that this investment will be the panacea to solve all

healthcare workforce needs, we believe that investing in people who want to stay in Maine and take care of our communities for years to come is a big part of the solution, especially as we face an aging population along with the third smallest proportion of people under the age of 18 in the nation.¹ We feel that LD 2267 is one part of a multi-pronged approach, which leverages all available resources to overcome workforce shortages .

Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

¹ 2020 Census Data: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/united-states-adult-population-grew-faster-than-nations-total-population-from-2010-to-2020.html>