



**LD 2268 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission
Regarding Foreign-trained Physicians Living in Maine to Establish
a Sponsorship Program for International Medical Graduates**

**Testimony in Support
March 19, 2024**

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial 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 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 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 more than 10,000 employees statewide.

I want to begin by thanking the members of the Commission Regarding Foreign Trained Physicians Living in Maine for their excellent work and recommendations to address the important need to find a pathway forward to support foreign trained health care professionals to care for the people of Maine.

Like many health care institutions in Maine, Northern Light has a shortage of qualified physicians to care for the statewide populations we serve. There is a potential resource pool among foreign trained physicians who currently are not eligible for licensure in the State of Maine, but otherwise have the necessary skill and training to be a functional part of Maine's physician workforce.

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center is an Accredited Sponsoring Institution for Graduate Medical Education and has the expertise to assess clinical competency while providing education to practice in the United States medical system. This bill will allow foreign trained physicians to enter a program where they can further hone their skills under the supervision of trained faculty while also gaining experience and confidence with a path to licensure.

I do want to call your attention to Section 4 of the bill – Application. The application process is structured to require the applicant to apply directly to the sponsoring institution. Operationally this is a challenging and inefficient process to determine qualified participants. For example if there are 25 foreign trained physicians applying for the 10 slots, they will likely submit an application to each of the 4 sponsoring institutions in Maine. Each institution will evaluate 25 applications and conceivably all four could choose the same applicants while other qualified applicants do not make the

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Sebasticook Valley Hospital

cut. The application section of the bill should be amended to create a centralized process to accept, screen and assign qualified applicants to award the 10 slots among the four sponsoring institutions in Maine.

The remaining sections of the bill outline the steps needed for such an endeavor and we feel the program outlined in this bill has adequate checks and oversight. The program will ensure that any physician granted licensure through this process has demonstrated competency and can act safely and care for the people of Maine. We ask that you support this important legislation.

Thank you.