



**Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth  
In Support Of  
LD 105, “An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission  
Regarding Foreign-trained Physicians Living in Maine to Establish a  
Sponsorship Program for Internationally Trained Physicians”  
February 5, 2025**

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Sarah Calder, Senior Government Affairs Director at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in support of LD 105, “An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission Regarding Foreign-trained Physicians Living in Maine to Establish a Sponsorship Program for Internationally Trained Physicians.”

MaineHealth is an integrated non-profit health care system that provides the full continuum of health care services to the residents of eleven counties in Maine and one in New Hampshire. MaineHealth recognizes the contribution our immigrant care team members make every day, and we are committed to helping them grow within their careers. Many of them have higher education degrees from other countries – including medical degrees – and as their English language skills improve, we provide guidance into other internal and external career pathway and training opportunities. But the barriers (at the state and federal levels) to fully integrating into the health care workforce – at the same skill and level they were trained in – are significant. These barriers were contemplated by the Foreign-trained Physician Commission in 2023, and we applaud their comprehensive approach to addressing some of these barriers, and the thoughtful solutions they endorsed in their report.

To that end, we strongly supported this bill last year and are grateful to Rep. Mathieson for resubmitting the bill this Session. The legislation before you today funds a robust system to train foreign-trained physicians so that they have an alternative to the very competitive Match process and to leverage the existing system of competency-based education to ensure that foreign-trained physicians practicing in the state of Maine have the same competency as US-trained physicians practicing in the state. According to the National Resident Matching Program, just 58.5% of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) realized a match compared to 93.5% of U.S. MD graduates who trained in the United States.

And LD 105 uses the expertise of the Maine Rural GME Education (MERGE) Collaborative, which is a collaboration between the four Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Sponsoring Institutions (teaching hospitals) in Maine, to develop a process to screen competency and place foreign-trained physicians in Maine.

We would, however, ask that the Committee amend the legislation as follows:

- The “participating health care facility” should not be limited to those in a physician shortage area, as it would limit the opportunities for training by excluding Maine Medical Center, for example, which is the largest teaching hospital in the state.

(3) "Participating health care facility" means a health care facility approved by the board that provides a program for internationally trained physicians according to criteria developed or approved by the board and that provides medical care in a physician shortage area.

- Adding “supervised” in the following sections:

3. Administration. Under the program, the authority shall use available funding to establish up to a total of 10 positions annually at one or more sponsoring institutions for the employment and training of internationally trained physicians issued a temporary educational license to practice supervised medicine pursuant to Title 32, section 3271, subsection 8, paragraph B. The authority shall enter into an agreement with each sponsoring institution that seeks to participate in the program.

B. An internationally trained physician may apply for a temporary educational license to practice supervised medicine for a renewable 2-year term if a sponsoring institution and the internationally trained physician submit evidence acceptable to the board that the internationally trained physician:

- “Clinical” should be added to the following section:

(4) Has entered into an agreement with the sponsoring institution providing that a participating health care facility shall develop, assess and evaluate the internationally trained applicant's familiarity with clinical and nonclinical skills and standards appropriate for the practice of medicine in the State, according to assessment and evaluation criteria developed or approved by the board;

Additionally, I would note that the State funding for the MERGE Collaborative is set to expire at the end of this year. Legislation sponsored by Senator Henry Ingwersen provides funding to continue the work of the MERGE Collaborative, as well as funding for other important initiatives like support of 15 new GME positions in rural areas. It is my hope that both that bill and LD 105 will receive the support of the Legislature to ensure new Mainers are able to integrate into the health care workforce using their education and experience from another country.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.