

Testimony in opposition of LD 238
*An Act to Protect Emergency Medical Services Persons' Right to Work in
Multiple Health Care Settings*

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Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Matthew Sholl. I am a board-certified Emergency and EMS physician. I work clinically in Emergency Medicine and EMS, teaching Emergency Medicine residents and EMS fellows. I have served as the State EMS Medical Director for approximately 15 years. I come to you today with an intimate knowledge of the Maine EMS system, including its triumphs and its challenges. As the State's EMS Medical Director, I, along with Dr. Zimmerman, function as the point physicians for Maine EMS and in that capacity, our primary objective is to ensure the patients served by the EMS system are provided the most excellent care possible. Our secondary objective is to ensure the EMS clinicians across the state have been provided the means to accomplish goal #1, through work on protocols, education, and quality performance review.

At the state level, the Office of Maine EMS is built to support, authorize, and regulate the care of patients in the 911, Interfacility, and Community Paramedicine domains. The system, and the agencies that make up Maine EMS are accustomed to functioning in those domains where they have developed expertise and comfort. Practice in the 911, interfacility, and community paramedicine realms come with standardized and objectively validated educational programming, structured oversight at the local, regional, and state level, engagement of medical direction, support from on-line medical consultation, and quality performance review, all of which combine to create a milieu of quality and safety in patient care. Clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities, the agent authorizing care, the parties responsible for education, quality review, credentialing, competency assessment, and longitudinal competency management is essential to maintain this environment of safe, effective, and quality care.

While this language change may seem simple and inconsequential on its surface, I fear this small change to the law will have tremendous and potentially grave impacts that could disrupt the atmosphere of safe, quality care. Who becomes responsible for credentialing a contractor or volunteer? Who is responsible for ensuring adequate education to accomplish the tasks they are asked to perform? If an issue with care arises, who is the party responsible for addressing those issues? And, who is the authorizing agent allowing the care being provided to occur?

In our current model, these questions are superfluous. When practicing in a 911, interfacility, or community paramedicine environment, the EMS clinician is working under the authority of Maine EMS, including the Maine EMS laws, rules, and protocols as well as pertinent local agency policies. When practicing as an EMPLOYEE of a healthcare setting, the individual is NOT practicing under their EMS license, but rather under the delegated authority of an appropriate

healthcare provider, with authorization, education, credentialling, quality control and oversight through that healthcare system.

I am opposed to LD 238 as I believe it introduces unnecessary vulnerabilities to the care of patients without adding additional employment opportunities to the EMS clinician that do not presently exist.

I will close with this: I have served as YOUR state medical director for approximately a decade and a half. I am one of a number of EMS physician experts in this state, but Dr Zimmerman and I are unique in that we are YOUR STATE EMS experts. In that role we are single minded in serving the citizens of and visitors to Maine as well as the EMS clinicians who care for those patients. We are the LAST neutral arbiters of the EMS system and the least encumbered EMS physicians in this state. I welcome your engagement surrounding issues related to EMS. We have experience with this type of practice and are happy to share that with you, including the difficulties that have been encountered surrounding similar practices and the reasons why those practices have failed. Please contact either one of us and we will be happy to discuss this further, or discuss any other issues related to the Maine EMS System.

I thank you for your time and appreciate your attention to this important matter.