



Brad Farrin
Senator, District 3

132nd MAINE SENATE

3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

**Presenting L.D. 239, “An Act to Allow Retail Pharmacies to Operate Remote
Dispensing Sites in Rural Areas”**

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee. My name is Senator Brad Farrin I am here today to present L.D. 239, “An Act to Allow Retail Pharmacies to Operate Remote Dispensing Sites in Rural Areas” and ask for your support.

This bill aims to help Mainers living in rural areas get their medications in a safe and secure way. It directs the Maine Board of Pharmacy to establish terms and conditions for the operation and licensing of remote dispensing sites by retail pharmacies. This bill addresses a critical need for improving access to prescription medications in rural areas while maintaining the necessary safeguards for patient safety and compliance with both state and federal pharmacy regulations.

Over the past decade, one out of every ten pharmacies in Maine has closed. The biggest drops have been in Washington County, where the number of pharmacies has decreased by 31%, and Somerset County, with a 22% decrease. In counties like Waldo, Somerset, Oxford, Sagadahoc, and York, there are very few pharmacies—only about 1 to 1.6 pharmacies per 100,000 people. In most parts of the state, except for Cumberland, York, and Sagadahoc, at least one-third of residents live more than 15 minutes away from a pharmacy. In Washington County, 84% of residents live over 15 minutes from the closest pharmacy.

While mail-order services work well for people needing chronic medications, the real problem is with acute medications, such as antibiotics, that need to be picked up quickly. Waiting too long to get these medications can lead to serious health issues. In many rural areas, it’s not financially possible for a full-service pharmacy to stay open, but a remote dispensing site that provides essential acute medications could make a big difference. It would save Mainers hours of travel time and help them start their medications on time.

I encourage you to support this bill which will help bring pharmacies to areas that need them the most by allowing remote dispensing sites. These sites will provide important medications under the supervision of licensed pharmacists to make sure they are safe and properly dispensed. This approach will help people get the medications they desperately need in a convenient and safe way.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Transportation Committee * Government Oversight Committee
State House (207) 287-1505 * Fax (207) 287-1527 * Toll Free 1-800-423-6900 * TTY 711
Brad.Farrin@legislature.maine.gov * legislature.maine.gov/senate*