

Testimony in support:

LD 805, "Resolve, to Direct the Board of Licensure in Medicine and the Board of Osteopathic Licensure to Conduct a Study Regarding the Feasibility of Combining Those Boards"
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
March 13, 2025

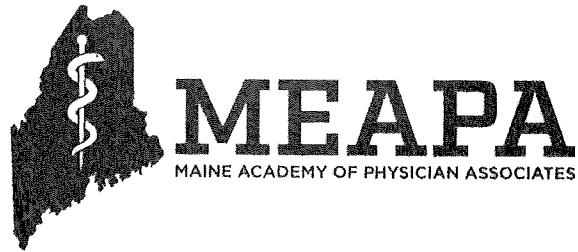
Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Kathleen Moneghan. I am the President of the Maine Academy of Physician Associates (MEAPA), a Dover-Foxcroft resident, and I practice medicine in Occupational Health and Urgent Care. MEAPA is a non-profit organization that represents over 1,000 PAs practicing in Maine and the patients we care for. Today, I am testifying on behalf of MEAPA in support of LD 805 "Resolve, to Direct the Board of Licensure in Medicine and the Board of Osteopathic Licensure to Conduct a Study Regarding the Feasibility of Combining Those Boards."

Maine does not have a licensing board dedicated to Physician Assistants (PAs). Instead, the Board of Licensure in Medicine (BOLIM) and the Board of Osteopathic Licensure (BOOL) both offer a pathway for PAs to be licensed. It is up to the PA to choose which board they want to be regulated by. Prior to 2016, PAs had the option to be licensed by both boards simultaneously. In 2016, the law changed, and PAs needed to pick which board they wanted to be licensed under on a permanent basis. The majority of PAs chose to be licensed under BOLIM simply because that is where they were already licensed. For PAs who chose licensure under BOOL, their license status changed to reflect that they were inactive, their license had been withdrawn/ terminated by licensee, or they had failed to renew on the BOLIM website. While all these descriptions are accurate, they only give half the story when it comes to verifying a PA license. There is not an additional message in the PA's entry informing the public that the clinician is licensed with a different board.

For PAs who have been in practice since the 2016 law change and chose BOOL, it has been frustrating to explain to patients, employers and other professionals that they are indeed licensed and in good standing; one needs to verify with BOOL, not just BOLIM. This inconvenience elevates to impacting patient safety when it comes to the pharmacy, however. PAs are finding their scripts rejected by pharmacists when pharmacists only seek license verification from BOLIM and not BOOL. This has a negative effect on the relationship and trust between our patients and clinicians and puts more strain on our support staff who then need to follow up with the pharmacist, explain how the two boards work and at times, walk them through the verification process over the phone. Of course, it also delays the order being filled for the patient, increasing wait time for vital medicines.

This is just one example of the positive impact a joint board will provide Maine PAs and one of the many reasons MEAPA supports this bill. We are encouraged by the boards' decision to explore a merger and ask that you vote "ought to pass" on LD 805.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



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