



Testimony in support:

LD 538, "An Act to Amend Maine's Prescription Drug Labeling Law by Allowing the Removal of the Name of a Prescriber of Mifepristone, Misoprostol and Their Generic Alternatives"

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

March 19, 2025

*From Laura Harper on behalf of Kathleen Moneghan, DHA, MPAS, PA-C, MEAPA President*

Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Laura Harper, I live in Hallowell and I'm a Senior Associate at Moose Ridge Associates. I'm testifying before you today on behalf of my client, the Maine Academy of PAs or MEAPA.

In 1977, MEAPA was incorporated as a nonprofit organization to represent PAs employed within the State of Maine. The PA profession originated in the 1960's, at a time when the US was experiencing a progressive shortage of physicians, particularly in primary care. The goal was to rapidly train and deploy safe and competent clinicians, to help address physician shortages and increase access to quality healthcare. Today, UNE, Maine's only PA Program focused on rural primary care, graduates approximately 50 students per year with 70% of them remaining in Maine to practice. There are more than 1,100 PAs practicing in Maine. Per our national affiliate's 2023 Annual Salary Report, 31.4% of Maine PAs work in primary care and 34% of all Maine PAs practice in a rural location. PAs in primary care in particular are essential to expand access to care for Mainers. Many patients in remote locations rely exclusively on PAs to deliver their care where access to physician-delivered primary care ranges from reduced to nonexistent. PAs in Maine and across the country continue to fill the physician shortage gap to this day and function alongside our physician colleagues as leaders in the interdisciplinary healthcare team.

First and foremost, MEAPA wishes to thank this committee for continually recognizing the value PAs bring to Maine and the unique role we as clinicians play in helping to address access to quality and affordability during this time of crisis and turmoil in the healthcare system as a whole. We see ourselves as partners alongside physicians, nurses and all healthcare professionals when it comes to ensuring all Mainers have access to the care they need, when they need it, close to home.

Therefore, it is no surprise that we are in strong support of LD 538. This bill protects PAs' ability to practice standard-of-care reproductive healthcare, as Maine law allows, with less fear of out-of-state vigilantism. Access to reproductive healthcare, specifically abortion care, is critical to protect individual's

physical and mental well-being, and it is in the best interest of broader public health. This area of medicine is well within our education and training and scope of practice. PAs in Maine provide access to medication abortion to our patients in our practices; we see first-hand how the criminalization of abortion care and how the judgment and shame attached to such laws impact the emotional and mental health of the people we care for. This bill will provide much needed protection for abortion providers as we see actions escalate nationally to penalize clinicians and erode access to all abortion care.

MEAPA urges you to vote in support of this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our comments and I'm happy to try and answer any questions you may have.