



Maine Community College System

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

323 State Street, Augusta, ME 04330-7131
(207) 629-4000 | Fax (207) 629-4048 | mccs.me.edu

TO: Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

FROM: Don Sheets BS, NRP, Interim EMS Director, Maine Community College System
DSheets@MaineCC.edu

RE: Testimony neither for nor against, LD 969, *An Act to Increase Emergency Medical Services Provider Training Opportunities*

DATE: March 25, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Don Sheets, I live in Cape Elizabeth and I am the Interim EMS Director for the Maine Community College System and the Clinical Coordinator in the EMS Department at Southern Maine Community College. I am here today to offer information on LD 969. The Maine Community College System has long engaged with Maine Emergency Medical Services (Maine EMS) and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system to ensure there is access to high quality education leading to EMS licensure across the State.

The demand for EMS education statewide has never been higher, and a collaborative approach has been critical in our efforts to help meet those demands, especially in rural areas, and provide equitable access across the state. Six of our colleges and our Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce now offer some level of EMS training. Our colleges support high school programs at the CTEs to build a career pathways and engage potential responders early in their education. We train hundreds of Mainers annually through academic programs so they can become EMTs or increase their skills and become Advanced EMTs or Paramedics. We use funds from the Maine Jobs and Recovery Program and the Harold Alfond

Center to partner with private EMS providers, municipalities and others to train hundreds more without cost to the student and either no cost or minimal cost to our municipalities.

In 2007, Maine EMS instituted the Training Center Approval Process to improve the quality of training offered across the state and to ensure higher levels of student success in achieving licensure. This review and approval process has been revised several times, most recently in 2023, and includes the ability for a municipal agency to become a training center. This process was designed to ensure accountability of those offering training, to ensure students were offered the best opportunity to succeed and were adequately prepared to enter the workforce here in Maine. This process has engaged both the EMS system at large and educators in an attempt to ensure we do not lose potential providers to frustrations from an education that has not prepared them for national certification and state licensure nor for their profession. We have seen this process, and the collaborative efforts of EMS educators across the state, lead to improved outcomes in our programs and students passing their national certification at or above national averages. When we properly prepare students to perform in this field they succeed on national exams and as providers.

Our collective students today require educators to deliver content in flexible and dynamic ways that can be challenging without robust supports from educational institutions. We work to ensure that any program offered on or off campus is met with the same quality and resources a student would experience within the walls of one of our colleges. There are ways in which we can support models of education that increase access while maintaining quality and the integrity of the licensing requirements for responders in Maine. We would urge thoughtful consideration about the implications of a model that removes protections for students and their future patients, and we encourage you to find a collaborative and creative approach to the problems you are considering today. We stand in support of education and the EMS system and look forward to working with our colleagues to ensure success and access moving forward.

Thank you