



**Testimony of Angela Westhoff, President & CEO  
Maine Health Care Association**

Testimony before the Committee on Health and Human Services in support of  
***LD 960, An Act Facilitating the Discharge of Hospitalized Patients to Nursing Facilities***

Public Hearing: Monday, March 24, 2025 at 10:00 am  
Cross Office Building, Room 209

Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer as well as Distinguished Members of the  
Committee on the Committee of Health and Human Services:

My name is Angela Westhoff, and I serve as the President & CEO of the Maine Health Care Association. We represent approximately 200 nursing homes, assisted living centers, and residential care facilities across the state. Our mission is to empower members to ensure the integrity, quality, and sustainability of long term care in Maine.

I am testifying in support of ***LD 960, An Act Facilitating the Discharge of Hospitalized Patients to Nursing Facilities.***

LD 960 addresses the urgent need for a more efficient process when a hospitalized patient requires long term care. Delays in guardianship determinations can leave patients stuck in hospitals, which not only limits access to care for others, but can also lead to negative health outcomes for the patient. By clarifying that a specific placement does not need to be secured before filing an emergency guardianship petition, the bill will help reduce these delays and facilitate more timely transitions to long term care. Additionally, we support efforts to accelerate the processing of MaineCare applications for hospitalized patients awaiting nursing home placement. Reducing the timeline from 45 days to 30 days is a practical step that will

reduce unnecessary hospital stays and allow patients to receive the care they need in the most appropriate setting.

We recognize the intent behind eliminating the 60-mile radius requirement for nursing home placements and understand that expanding placement options could help alleviate bottlenecks in the system. At the same time, this change presents challenges. It is valuable to ensure that outgoing hospital patients are placed in a long term care setting that aligns with patient needs and preferences, which almost always means being placed in a facility close to home and loved ones. And yet, given the limited availability of nursing home beds across Maine, transferring a patient to a facility further away from family and community support is not ideal but, sadly, often the best option left available given our health care system.

Removing the geographic restriction will help patients relocate to a facility better suited to their care, but it does not address the underlying issue of insufficient long term care capacity statewide. If this provision is to pass, we encourage the legislature to also pursue broader efforts to expand nursing home capacity, support workforce recruitment, and ensure sustainable reimbursement rates that allow facilities to accept more residents.

Overall, LD 960 is an important step in addressing hospital discharge challenges and ensuring that patients receive timely, appropriate care. I appreciate the committee's attention to these challenging issues and urge continued attention to solutions that are practical, sustainable, and beneficial to both residents and providers. Thank you for your time.