



Maine Medical Association



Testimony in OPPOSITION to LD 828, An Act to Allow Chiropractors to Be Designated as School Health Advisors, on behalf of:
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Medical Association
Maine Nurse Practitioner Association
Maine Osteopathic Association

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
March 31st, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and esteemed members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Madeleine DesFosses, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of my organization, the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Maine AAP), as well as the Maine Medical Association (MMA), the Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA), and the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association (MNPA). We strongly oppose LD 828, which would allow school boards to appoint chiropractors to act as school health advisors.

The Maine AAP is a membership organization of 300 pediatricians and subspecialists across the state who are dedicated to improving the health and lives of children and adolescents in Maine.

MMA is a professional organization representing over 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people.

MOA is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

MNPA is a professional organization representing over 3,100 Advance Practice Registered Nurses who provide high-quality health care in Maine, including the specialized practice of school based health care.

Under current Maine statute (Title 20-A, section 6402-A), each school board shall appoint at least one physician or family or pediatric nurse practitioner to act as school health advisor (SHA). Maine law also states that the role of the SHA is to advise the administration on school health issues, policies and practices, and perform other functions such as serving as a medical consultant to the school nurse and examining and diagnosing students to protect against the outbreak of contagious disease in the school. Both physicians and family or pediatric nurse practitioners receive specialized training in the unique challenges of assessing, advising and treating children and families in the context of a school environment. No other category of practitioner in Maine currently meets the specialized training required to perform the duties of an SHA.

While these duties and functions fall well within the scope of practice for physicians, and family and pediatric nurse practitioners, they do not align with the chiropractic scope of practice as outlined by the Maine Board of Chiropractic Licensure:

“Chiropractic” means the art and science of identification and correction of subluxation and the accompanying physiological or mechanical abnormalities. The term subluxation, as utilized within the chiropractic health care system, means a structural or functional impairment of an intact articular unit¹...Chiropractic methodologies utilized for the identification or correction of subluxation and the accompanying physiological or mechanical abnormalities include diagnostic, therapeutic, adjustive or manipulative techniques utilized within the chiropractic profession, excluding prescriptive medication or surgery.

Chiropractors, while skilled in spinal health and manual therapies, do not receive the necessary training in infectious diseases, mental health, nutrition, or pharmacology that are essential for comprehensive school health advisement. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) emphasizes the importance of having licensed medical doctors or advanced practice providers oversee school health programs (1). The current law assures that SHAs have the necessary education and medical training necessary to properly advise and aid the school community on school health issues, and this proposed change would put the health of Maine schools at risk.

We also understand that chiropractors want to provide school-related services such as physicals, concussion management, and return-to-play guidelines. This care was sought through LD 790, which was heard in the Health Care Coverage and Financial Services Committee. As you know, HCIFS voted “ought not to pass” on that legislation and sent this committee a letter. In that discussion, chiropractors noted that this care was within their scope of practice. Our members do not interpret the law to mean that that type of comprehensive care is within their scope.

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/articular> (articular defined as “of or relating to a joint”).

In closing, LD 828 represents a step backward in ensuring the highest standards of school health oversight. We urge you to help maintain school health advisor roles for those with the necessary advanced and specialized medical training and vote 'Ought NOT to Pass' on LD 828.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madeleine DesFosses
Advocacy and Public Health Manager, Maine AAP

Sources:

1. COUNCIL ON SCHOOL HEALTH, Breena Welch Holmes, Anne Sheetz, Mandy Allison, Richard Ancona, Elliott Attisha, Nathaniel Beers, Cheryl De Pinto, Peter Gorski, Chris Kjolhede, Marc Lerner, Adrienne Weiss-Harrison, Thomas Young; Role of the School Nurse in Providing School Health Services. *Pediatrics* June 2016; 137 (6): e20160852. 10.1542/peds.2016-0852
2. Lee AC, Li DH, Kemper KJ. Chiropractic care for children. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 2000;154:401–7. doi: 10.1001/archpedi.154.4.401.