

**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF LD 961 - *An Act to Address Maine's Health Care Workforce Shortage and Improve Access to Care***

Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee, my name is Dr. Valerie Fuller. I am a Nurse Practitioner (NP) and a resident of Falmouth. I am a Maine native, born in Farmington and raised in Livermore Falls.

I am here before you today to request your support of LD 961. Since 1995, Nurse Practitioners in Maine have been required to complete a 2-year supervisory period. This requirement was never based on data or safety concerns but rather a political compromise made 30 years ago. For reference, there are 4 types of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) in Maine – Certified Nurse Midwives, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologists, Clinical Nurse Specialists, and Certified Nurse Practitioners. The only APRN in the state that has a 2-year supervisory requirement are Nurse Practitioners – this is not only an unnecessary barrier but a discriminatory one as well.

I have personal experience with this barrier. I completed my NP education in 1998 and moved to Portland, Oregon. Oregon is a full practice authority state that does not have a supervisory requirement. I practiced for 5 years in Oregon prior to moving back to Maine. Upon my return, I was literally stopped in my tracks at the Maine State Board of Nursing and told that I would not qualify for a NP license until I could demonstrate 2 years of supervision. It took months for me to work out a solution - months that I was not earning an income and most importantly, months that I was not providing health care to the citizens of Maine.

I served as a member of the Maine State Board of Nursing from 2010 to 2024 and for clarity, my term ended last June, and I am not speaking on behalf of the board. However, having served that board, I can tell you without question that this regulation is a barrier for NPs who are looking to move to, or stay in, Maine. I have spoken to countless NPs who have opted not to practice in this state because of it. Many have chosen to work in New Hampshire, a neighboring state that does not impose a supervisory requirement.

Earlier last year I was contacted by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Aging and Disability Services. They wanted to know if I had any ideas on how to expand healthcare access and attract more NPs to Maine. My answer was swift and unequivocal - remove the 2-year supervisory requirement. It is a no-added cost, no-risk solution to attract more Nurse Practitioners to this state and improve healthcare access for thousands of Mainers.

Maine continues to face a shortage of qualified health care providers - this unnecessary regulation bottlenecks our healthcare workforce, hinders our ability to attract Nurse Practitioners to the state, and needlessly restricts the number of providers who would otherwise evaluate, diagnose, and treat patients.

**I urge you to vote in favor of LD 961.**

Thank you.  
Valerie Fuller