

Testimony for the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

April 15, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathiesen and members of the HCIFS Committee,

I am Jane Pringle, M.D. and I live in Windham. I am here to testify against LD 961, An Act to Address Maine's Health Care Workforce Shortage and improve Access To Care.

I agree with the intent of this bill to improve access to care for patients in Maine, but I am very much opposed to the proposal to decrease the training period currently required for Nurse Practitioners to begin providing care independently.

Over my 36 years of clinical practice and teaching as a Board Certified General Internist I have worked closely with Nurse Practitioners as part of my Care Team. I have taught NP's in the USM nurse practitioner program beginning in the 1970's. RN's and NP's are known to be excellent at developing patient rapport and be outstanding patient caregivers and educators

Nurse Practitioners have been an essential member of the care teams in the Ambulatory Care Clinics at Maine Medical Center (MMC). These are the training site for the various Residency and Fellowship Programs at MMC. I served as Medical Director of all of these outpatient practices from 2000 to 2012.

When I was interviewing for the position of Medical Director one of the questions I received was from an experienced Nurse Practitioner in the Medical Clinic. She shared that as an NP she often had to wait when she wanted to consult an attending teacher until all the residents had presented their patients to the attending. This often put her behind her schedule and delayed care for her other patients.

When I became the Director I worked with our team to schedule Attendings to provide NP coverage when they were not also teaching residents. Many of these NP's had as many as 25 years of practice experience yet still wanted access to attending physicians for their complex patients.

Finally, I do not know of any state that allows physicians to enter independent practice without 3-5 years of residency training which requires attending physician supervision throughout the period of residency. Allowing this for nurse practitioners does not make sense.

** additional explanatory comments*

Thank you for listening. I am happy to answer any questions. I ask you to vote Ought Not to Pass.

Jane P. Pringle, M.D., F.A.C.P.