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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier presenting

LD 1583, An Act Regarding Home Health Care and Hospice Services Ordered by a Health Care Provider Outside of Maine *Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Representative Kristen Cloutier and I am here to present **LD 1583, An Act Regarding Home Health Care and Hospice Services Ordered by a Health Care Provider Outside of Maine**.

LD 1583 seeks to make a simple clarification in Maine law, so that providers of home care and hospice services have complete confidence that they are operating fully within our state's regulations.

Currently there are numerous instances in which Maine patients seek care in other states. For instance, many people who live along the border with New Hampshire receive some of their health care services in our neighboring state. In addition, many Mainers travel to Boston for specialty care or due to a center-of-excellence relationship with their Maine-based provider.

The problem occurs when these patients return home to their health care providers here in Maine. Current regulations in Maine are unclear and potentially contradictory with regard to whether Maine-based providers are allowed to carry out orders from out-of-state physicians. This ambiguity creates confusion and hesitation, ultimately affecting the delivery of essential care to patients in need.

While in some cases, primary care physicians (PCP) in Maine may be able to issue orders for specialty care when their patient returns home, this is not always the case. A PCP may not have the necessary expertise or familiarity with the patient's specific condition, and may recognize the liability present, and therefore may not be comfortable issuing such orders.

LD 1583 addresses this issue by providing clear guidelines for Maine providers to follow. By allowing them to deliver home health care and hospice services based on orders from out-of-state physicians who have conducted an in-person physical examination, we can ensure that patients receive the care they need in a timely and efficient manner.

This issue was brought to me directly by Andwell, a home care and hospice provider in my community. You will hear from them and others today who have direct experience with this issue and who can provide real life examples of how this problem interferes with the delivery of critical health care services in our state.

LD 1583 is not about changing the standard of care, but rather about providing clarity and consistency in our regulations. Maine providers need to know that they are operating within the law, and this bill provides them with the necessary guidance.

I urge you to support LD 1583, which will help to improve the delivery of home health care and hospice services in our state. By doing so, we can ensure that patients receive the care they need, and providers can operate with confidence and clarity.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have, although I may defer to the providers offering testimony after me, who can speak to their own experiences.