

***In- Support
LD 1590***

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and honorable members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

I'm Jayne Van Bramer, Sweetser's President and CEO. Sweetser is part of a coalition of partners including the Behavioral Health Community Collaborative and the Maine Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. I am here today to urge your support for LD 1590 that would grant licensure reciprocity for qualified clinicians licensed in other states to practice here in Maine. We appreciate Rep. Crafts for putting this coalition priority bill forward.

As you are well aware, our communities—urban and rural alike—are facing a growing shortage of social workers and licensed professional counselors. The demand for care is rising, but access to care has not kept pace and qualified professionals are sidelined by barriers in our licensing system. As a provider of behavioral health services, we see it every day: long waitlists, communities without clinicians, and people turned away from receiving help simply because we do not have the clinical staff.

Across the country, thousands of highly qualified therapists, counselors and social workers are licensed, working, and ready to serve. There are clinicians who are already trained, vetted, and actively serving patients in other states willing to consider positions in Maine. But under our current system, even clinicians in good standing—who've undergone education and training, background checks, and years of experience—face lengthy and redundant processes just to be allowed to help people here in Maine. We need to both streamline and automate our current practice to make it easy for out of state clinicians to come to Maine to provide care here in Maine while we await the years it will take for the compact license process to be implemented. Our children, adults and families struggling with mental health and/or substance use disorders cannot wait.

This does not mean we are lowering our standards, but it does mean clinicians would be able to practice in Maine more quickly, safely and responsibly. We're asking to recognize the professional standards for licensure that already exist in other states and remove the artificial barriers and red tape that makes recruitment harder, delays care and can ultimately even costs lives. These clinicians would need to be licensed in another state and be in good standing with their state licensing Board. We also recommend they should not be allowed to come to Maine and open a private practice but would only be authorized to work for a Maine organization, agency or hospital given we provide clinical oversight and supervision including medical record reviews/audits.

Under the current system, we don't just have a bureaucratic problem—we have a real barrier to the provision of critical behavioral health services and wellness for thousands of people. We have the chance to change that.

Let's encourage clinicians to move to Maine this year by adopting immediate licensure reciprocity. We already have a simplified model for this in Maine's Nursing profession. They require a one-page form to be filled out and attested to prior to granting a Maine Nursing license. By passing this legislation, you can send a powerful message: that mental health matters, and that we are ready to act boldly to meet the need.

So let's take this step together. Let's open the door to skilled professionals who are ready and eager to serve our communities. Let's put care first.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to the mental health of our constituents in Maine. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jayne Van Bramer
President & CEO



MAINE STATE BOARD OF NURSING

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VERIFICATION OF REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NURSE LICENSURE

Submitted to original state of licensure when the state does not participate in NURSYS verification and Canadian and foreign licensing authorities

To _____ Board of Nursing

Name of Applicant _____

Present Address _____

License Number _____ Date of Birth _____ Social Security Number _____

INFORMATION BELOW TO BE COMPLETED BY THE BOARD OF NURSING IN YOUR STATE OF ORIGINAL LICENSURE

EDUCATION

High School Diploma: ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ G.E.D.

Nursing Program: State Accredited? ☐ YES ☐ NO Type: ☐ Associate Degree ☐ Baccalaureate Degree ☐ Diploma

Name of Nursing Program _____

Address _____

Date of Entrance _____ Date of Graduation _____ Length of Program _____

LICENSURE

License Number _____ Date Issued _____ Expiration Date of Current License _____

Issued by: ☐ Exam ☐ Endorsement ☐ Waiver

Has license ever been suspended, revoked, probated, reprimanded, or limited/restricted? ☐ YES (please attach explanation) ☐ No

EXAMINATION

Results of State Board Test Pool Examination/NCLEX (please indicate if exam was taken more than one time) Series Number: _____

Scores: *if applicant did not write SBTPE/NCLEX, specify type of test and list subjects and grades on back

Medical Nursing	_____	Psychiatric Nursing	_____
Obstetric Nursing	_____	Surgical Nursing	_____
Nursing of Children	_____	Comprehensive NCLEX	_____

Canadian Exams: ☐ CNATS ☐ Provincial Taken in: ☐ English ☐ French

NAME & TITLE _____

STATE _____

DATE _____

(SEAL)