



Janet T. Mills
Governor

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL
& FINANCIAL REGULATION
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL REGULATION



Joan F. Cohen
Commissioner

TESTIMONY OF
PENNY VAILLANCOURT, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE BOARD OF DENTAL PRACTICE

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST L.D. 1615

“An Act to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry”

Sponsored by Representative Ambureen Rana

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Public Hearing: April 30, 2025, 1:00 PM

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Committee. My name is Penny Vaillancourt, and I am the Deputy Commissioner of DPFR and Acting Executive Director of the Maine Board of Dental Practice (“Board”). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation (“OPOR”) neither for nor against the provisions of LD 1615 that creates a new dentist licensure category. We are, however, opposed to creating a pathway to full dentist licensure that recognizes licensed experience as an adjunct dentist as a substitute in meeting the minimum educational requirements for full dentist licensure.

The Board’s sole purpose is to protect the public health and welfare of Maine citizens. The board carries out this purpose by ensuring that the public is served by competent and honest practitioners and by establishing minimum standards of proficiency in the professions regulated by the board by testing, licensing, regulating and disciplining practitioners of those regulated professions. *See* 32 M.R.S. § 18321

LD 1615 amends the Dental Practice Act by creating a new dentist licensure category, adjunct dentist license, which authorizes an individual to practice dentistry in board-approved settings under the supervision of a fully licensed dentist pursuant to a written practice agreement. This bill also identifies a pathway for full dentist licensure for an individual who has earned a bachelor’s degree in dentistry and who has obtained 3 years of experience as a Maine licensed adjunct dentist.

Office Location: 76 Northern Avenue, Gardiner, Maine 04345
Mailing Address: 35 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333
www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/

Phone: (207) 624-8603

TTY: Please Call Maine Relay 711

Fax: (207) 624-8637

This is likely an initiative to create a license category for foreign trained dentists who do not meet the educational qualifications to obtain a full dentist license. While OPOR is supportive of efforts to reduce unnecessary barriers to licensure, it cannot support substituting supervised experience in meeting the minimum educational standard of a doctoral degree for full dentist licensure.

Lowering the minimum educational standard from a doctoral degree in dentistry to a bachelor's degree in dentistry is contrary to ensuring public protection. The Board's experience in reviewing transcript analyses of candidates who have submitted educational equivalency reports reveals a wide variation in how foreign academic degrees are granted. In some instances, transcript analysis shows the academic credential of a bachelor's degree in dental science, dental surgery, dental examination, medicine, and basic medical sciences.

The Board has been working closely with stakeholders over the past six years to develop pathways to licensure for foreign trained dentists and dental hygienists. In 2020, the Board amended its rules governing licensure by endorsement authorizing the Board to review, on a case-by-case basis, equivalent education for applicants who obtained a dental/dental hygiene degree from a program that was not accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). In addition, the Board proposed legislation in 2021 creating pathways for initial licensure to recognize foreign trained dental professionals in jurisdictions outside of the US and Canadian provinces (PL 2021, c.163)

I have included licensure data below reflecting the number of foreign trained dental professionals that have obtained full dentist licensure:

Dentist Licensure Data Beginning 2020 – 4/26/2025+ Calendar Year	License Type	# of Licenses Issued	# of Foreign Trained Dentists
2020	Dentist – Full Licensure	76	2
2021	Dentist – Full Licensure	75	10
2022	Dentist – Full Licensure	82	8
2023	Dentist – Full Licensure	83	10
2024	Dentist – Full Licensure	98	10
2025+	Dentist – Full Licensure	22	3

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I would be happy to answer any questions now or at work session.