

Testimony of Jordan G Shaw, LCPC

In Support of LD 2082

An Act to Regulate the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Providing Certain Mental Health Services

Senator Pierce, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

My name is Jordan G Shaw, and I am a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor practicing in the State of Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today in strong support of LD 2082.

I want to begin with a simple truth from the counseling room: people come to therapy when they are at their most vulnerable. They come carrying grief, trauma, anxiety, isolation, and hope. What helps them heal is not just information — it is relationship, trust, and the presence of a trained professional who can listen, interpret nuance, and respond ethically in real time.

As artificial intelligence becomes more common in health care, we are being asked an important question: How do we embrace innovation without losing the human core of mental health care? LD 2082 answers that question responsibly.

This bill does not reject technology. It recognizes that AI can support licensed clinicians with administrative work and documentation, helping us spend more time with clients rather than behind a computer. But critically, it makes clear that **clinical responsibility remains with the licensed professional**. That principle mirrors the foundation of Maine's counseling licensure system — accountability, ethical practice, and public protection.

Maine licenses counselors because the public deserves more than an algorithm when they seek mental health care. Licensure means years of graduate education, supervised experience, ethical training, and ongoing professional oversight. LD 2082 protects that framework by ensuring that AI cannot independently make therapeutic decisions, cannot engage directly in therapeutic communication, and cannot generate treatment plans without professional review.

Those protections matter. Therapy involves reading tone of voice, body language, silence, risk signals, and cultural context. It requires clinical judgment that develops through experience and supervision. No technology — no matter how advanced — can replace the ethical responsibility that comes with a license to practice counseling in Maine.

Another strength of this bill is its emphasis on informed consent. Clients must be clearly told when AI is being used, why, and how their data will be stored and protected, and they must give explicit, revocable consent. That aligns with core counseling values: autonomy, transparency, and respect for client dignity.

I also want to emphasize why this legislation matters for consumer protection. Across the country, we are seeing AI-powered apps that advertise themselves as therapy but operate without oversight from licensed professionals. Some of these tools may provide convenience, but they do not carry the ethical obligations, crisis awareness, or accountability that licensed professionals provide. LD 2082 clearly states that, in Maine, counseling and therapy must remain under the care of licensed clinicians.

This is not about resisting progress. In fact, the bill allows research and federally authorized innovation to continue. It simply says that innovation should strengthen care, not replace professional responsibility or weaken client protections.

As a counselor, I often tell clients that healing happens when people feel seen and safely held. Technology can assist us, but it cannot hold that responsibility. That is why Maine's licensure priorities — protecting the public, ensuring professional competence, and maintaining ethical practice — are so important. LD 2082 clearly and thoughtfully reflects those priorities.

In closing, I urge you to support LD 2082. This bill protects clients, supports clinicians, and ensures that as technology evolves, mental health care in Maine remains human-centered, ethical, and accountable.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the mental health and well-being of Maine people.