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Maine Coast Hospital
Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Sebastcook Valley Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Northern Light Medical Transport
& Emergency Care
Northern Light Pharmacy
Northern Light Work Health

LD 2199 An Act to Prohibit Interference with the Professional Judgment and Clinical Decisions of Licensed Health Care Professionals as Recommended by the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State

Testimony in Opposition

February 18, 2026

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and member of the Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN and I am the Vice President of Government Relation for Northern Light Health. I am here today testifying in opposition to this bill.

Northern Light Health organizations include 9 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with more than 10,000 employees statewide.

This bill states that a health care entity, facility or provider organization may not directly or indirectly interfere with, control or otherwise direct the professional judgment or clinical decision of a licensed health care professional with independent practice authority who provides health care services at or through a health care entity. Conduct prohibited under the bill includes, but is not limited to, controlling, either directly or indirectly, through discipline, punishment, threats, adverse employment actions, coercion, retaliation or excessive pressure.

This bill will have harmful impact on our patients and fraudulent impact on health care entities should it be passed into law. This bill clearly states that a licensed health care professional has sole decision-making authority on hospital admissions, observation status and discharge of patients from inpatient care. Healthcare payers have specific criteria that hospitals must follow to admit patients to inpatient care, observation status is also defined by the payer and patients no longer clinically qualifying for inpatient care but remaining in hospitals have no insurance coverage for their care. Hospitals must also have a safe discharge plan in place for patients; the bill does not acknowledge this responsibility. Should a provider admit patients and compel billing for care when the patient does not meet payer criteria, this is fraud. If the provider directs a patient to be admitted acknowledging that care cannot be billed for then the patient will be provided with notification in writing that they are financially responsible for the care. Creating a financial burden that patients should not have when there is full

knowledge the patient does not qualify for the level of care directed by independent authority health care professionals.

This bill also prohibits a health care entity from interfering with independent professional judgement that results in unsafe care, direct harm to patients, fraudulent clinical documentation and any professional practice or decision that deviates from evidence-based care and compliant health care business practices.

Given that employer conduct prohibited under the bill includes, but is not limited to, controlling, either directly or indirectly, through discipline, punishment, threats, adverse employment actions, coercion, retaliation or excessive pressure the very real outcome of this legislation will be that hospitals along with all the health care entities employing health care professionals today will dramatically reduce employment of health care professionals with independent practice authority. This will have a devastating impact on access to health care throughout the State of Maine, particularly in rural Maine where hospitals and health centers are often the sole source of primary care and specialty services.

We ask that you oppose this harmful legislation.

Thank you.