



Penobscot Community
Health Care

State of Maine | 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Testimony of Dr. Israel Adeloye & Danica Loring on behalf of Penobscot Community Health Care

February 24, 2026

In support of:

LD 2206, An Act Expanding Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and members of the Committee, we are Dr. Israel Adeloye & Danica Loring from Penobscot Community Health Care (PCHC). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of LD 2206, *An Act Expanding Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry*.

Founded in 1997, PCHC is a non-profit Federally Qualified Health Center renowned for its comprehensive dental services. Our Dental Center boasts 41 operatories and offers a wide spectrum of care including basic restorations, extractions, endodontics, routine hygiene, orthodontics, and walk-in services. In 2025 alone, PCHC Dental Center has provided critical care to 5,910 individuals through 18,187 encounters.

Maine's Dental Workforce Crisis Is Real

Maine does not have enough dentists — particularly in rural and underserved communities. Demand for dental care has dramatically outpaced provider availability. At PCHC, we have not regularly accepted new patients for years. The last time we were fully open to new patient intake was in 2019. Our emergency dental walk in services have remained open during most of this time, with the access crisis acutely evident on most mornings when we see long lines of patients seeking emergency care build outside our dental clinic even before the clinic opens.

We continue to recruit dentists aggressively, yet hiring is extremely difficult. Qualified providers are available — including dentists trained outside the United States who have completed rigorous education and examinations — but current licensing barriers prevent them from practicing within the state of Maine.

This results in a painful reality: patients wait months or years for care while capable clinicians are forced to leave Maine to practice elsewhere.



Penobscot Community
Health Care

LD 2206 Is the Product of Careful Study

This proposal is not theoretical. It is the direct result of the Commission to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Studying Alternative Pathways for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry, created by the Legislature last session.

We both had the honor of serving on that commission. Over three meetings, we heard testimony from regulators, educators, workforce experts, and dental professionals. We carefully examined patient safety, workforce needs, and best practices from other states.

LD 2206 reflects that work. It proposes an **associate dentist license** allowing qualified dentists — including those trained internationally — to practice under general supervision in board-approved settings pursuant to a written practice agreement. This is a carefully structured, supervised pathway.

Strong Safeguards Protect Patients

This model maintains high standards while expanding access:

- Practice only under general supervision of a Maine-licensed dentist
- Verification of successfully passing all examinations required by the board
- Required written practice agreements outlining permitted procedures, safety protocols, and quality assurance measures
- Practice limited to approved settings
- A pathway to full licensure after demonstrated safe practice for 6 years

These safeguards mirror those already used successfully for dental therapists and other licensed professionals. In fact, this approach ensures accountability: supervising dentists must be confident enough in these clinicians to formally oversee their work.

Other States Have Proven This Works

Massachusetts has operated a similar limited licensure system for decades, allowing foreign-trained dentists to practice in public health settings under supervision. During our commission's work, we heard directly from the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Dentistry. She explained that their limited license allows these dentists to practice only at designated institutions and under supervision — often in community health centers — precisely where the need is greatest.

Importantly, when asked she noted that there have been no safety concerns associated with that model. It has simply expanded access to care. Maine can learn from this success while tailoring the system to our needs.



Penobscot Community
Health Care

This Bill Helps the Patients Who Need Care Most

Community health centers serve patients who often have nowhere else to go — including MaineCare recipients, seniors, children, and working families without dental coverage. Every unfilled dentist position translates directly into untreated pain, infection, missed school days, lost work time, and worsening overall health. LD 2206 gives us a responsible way to bring more qualified providers into Maine's workforce while maintaining strong oversight and patient protections.

A Personal Perspective

Given our combined experiences as clinicians and dental practice leaders responsible for patient care, we would not support any proposal that compromises quality or safety.

We support this bill because it does the opposite — it expands access while preserving standards. It gives community health centers the tools we need to serve our patients and fulfill our mission.

Conclusion

Maine's oral health crisis requires practical, evidence-based solutions. LD 2206 is exactly that. This legislation reflects careful study, real-world models, and the urgent needs of Maine people.

On behalf of Penobscot Community Health Care and the patients we serve, we respectfully urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 2206 so every Mainer can get the dental care they deserve. Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to improving access to oral health care in Maine.

Sincerely,

Dr. Israel Adeloeye, DMD, MPH
Dental Clinical Director
Penobscot Community Health Care
1048 Union Street | Bangor, Maine 04401

Danica Loring, CDA, EFDA
Director of Operations
Dental Center and Jackman Community Health Center
Penobscot Community Health Care
1048 Union Street | Bangor, Maine 04401