

To: Members State of Maine Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Date: March 23, 2026

Subject: Testimony in support of LD 1128 "An Act to Modernize the Formulary for Naturopathic Doctors"

Distinguished committee members:

My name is Esperanza (Hope) Valcarcel. I have lived and work in Maine for the last 36 years as an Oncology Data Specialist (formerly Tumor Registrar & also Cancer Registrar) reporting malignancies & other reportable benign conditions to the State of Maine Cancer Registry (MCR). During this time I have read a lot of medical records in order to comply with reporting to the MCR. When I first came to Maine I noticed there were a lot of physicians and other healthcare practitioners that had been working in Maine for longer than 20 years. For the past 15 years or so I have seen the decline in physicians that come to Maine to work and stay.

Currently area hospitals must hire physicians and other healthcare providers from other states on a short-term basis at a huge cost. Naturopathic Doctors (ND) have been licensed in Maine for 30 years but, unlike other states, they are limited as to what medications they can prescribe & treatments they provide (such as IV therapy beyond basic hydration, which can be very helpful in long COVID, tick-borne illness, and other chronic illnesses). Naturopathic medicine is a distinct and comprehensive system of primary health care that uses natural methods and substances to support and stimulate the body's self-healing process. NDs can fill the increasing medical practitioner void in Maine if allowed to provide whole-person care to patients in Maine communities & hospitals. As a patient, and someone that sees time and time again in medical records what ensues from the lack of licensed practitioners to provide healthcare services, I am convinced state and federal obstacles preventing licensed NDs from being a greater asset to our healthcare system must be eliminated.

Before writing this letter I went to the internet to inform myself why NDs need an updated formulary. It surprised me that NDs can prescribe insulin but not metformin, which is the currently first-line treatment for diabetes. They can prescribe epi-pens but not an inhaler, which is critical for basic management of asthma. The current antiquated ND formulary is far from meeting modern standards of care. Maine State law must allow NDs to provide Maine residents comprehensive, quality healthcare services by modernizing their prescribing rights and updating the current antiquated formulary to that of Medical Doctors & Osteopathic Doctors. Nurse Practitioners and Physician assistants can prescribe most modern medicines with supervision, but NDs are not allowed the same prescribing rights under Maine law.

I am one of the lucky Maine residents that has a regular MD and a ND who jointly provide me with the healthcare I need as I age. Due to her busy schedule & her organization's time constraints my MD cannot usually see me for longer than 15 minutes for regular visits with a bit longer for annual physical exams. My ND sees me for approximately 1 hour per visit where we thoroughly discusses all my health issues & she makes provisions to ensure I leave each visit with a comprehensive plan to address these issues. I provide my regular MD with copies of my ND visits and to this day she has always agreed to my ND's recommendations. She has expressed to me she is glad I have a ND to provide me with the time and healthcare options that she cannot provide. Thanks to this dual practice "chronic asthma" is no longer one of my diagnoses. My ND has prescribed natural medications that have helped with my multiple allergies so I no longer take prescription allergy medications or OTC medications. Currently my ND is assisting my inability to sleep by prescribing

natural medicines while avoiding the addictive prescriptions medications regularly prescribed by other healthcare practitioners.

The new formulary has been approved by the Board of Complementary Healthcare and has obtained the approval of the Attorney General. Final approval by the HCIFS is required before the new formulary is adopted by the legislature. I urge you to allow the expansion of the formulary. Limiting access to the list of medications an ND can prescribe in Maine causes a significant delay in obtaining timely health and wellness services, which is directly linked to negative health outcomes. The ND formulary should be consistent with the current formulary allowing other healthcare practitioners to prescribe medications and intravenous therapy as allowed by other states.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of LD 1128.

Respectfully,

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