

**Subject: Opposed to LD 295 – Constituent feedback on this important vote.**

Good morning, Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

My name is Jay Mullen, an emergency physician and resident of Freeport. I am also the CEO of BlueWater Emergency Partners which employs about 100 emergency physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants in Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts. In Maine, I'm on staff at Houlton Regional Hospital, Mid Coast Hospital, Franklin Memorial Hospital and Pen Bay Medical Center.

I am writing to respectfully ask you to oppose LD 295, the bill to remove post-graduate training and supervisory requirements for nurse practitioners.

Current law requires nurse practitioners to be licensed under supervision of a physician or an experienced nurse practitioner for 24 months after school.

“A certified nurse practitioner who qualifies as an advanced practice registered nurse must practice, for at least 24 months, under the supervision of a licensed physician or a supervising nurse practitioner or must be employed by a clinic or hospital that has a medical director who is a licensed physician. The certified nurse practitioner shall submit written evidence to the board upon completion of the required clinical experience.”

LD 295 proposes to strike this section making a newly graduated nurse practitioner the same under state law as a physician who has graduated from medical school and completed at least 3 years of standardized and completely supervised post graduate training. Nearly every primary care physician in Maine is prohibited from full decision-making authority, or independent practice authority, for patients until 7 years after their first day of medical school.

While physicians are not allowed to practice independently until we have trained for approximately 20,000 hours in a standardized way, there is no standardized education for NPs. Many of these programs', with 100% acceptance rates, offer coursework that is completely online. [Direct entry](#) programs exist where students can simultaneously earn their RN degree and their NP degree. In other words, these students can become Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioners without ever having worked in a clinical setting as a nurse. Nurse practitioners are required to work only 500 clinical hours before sitting for their boards.

A recent piece in Medical Economics called out the quality issues that are just starting to become apparent in this regard. (<https://www.medicaleconomics.com/view/problem-diploma-mills-medicine>)

“Unfortunately, this lower quality of training and clinical experience is beginning to become apparent. New studies are demonstrating that removing standardized curriculum and physician supervision from nurse practitioner training and practice is impacting the quality of patient care, including [poorer quality referrals\[i\]](#) to specialists compared to primary care physicians, [more unnecessary skin biopsies\[ii\]](#) than physicians, [increased diagnostic imaging,\[iii\]](#) [increased prescriptions\[iv\]](#) including [increased antibiotic prescribing\[v\]](#) and higher opioid prescribing shown in the states of [Connecticut](#) and [New Hampshire](#). Payouts for [malpractice claims](#) against NPs are also on the rise, as are claims for the [improper prescribing and management of controlled substances](#). With training programs churning out NPs at a rate of [23,000 per year](#),

compared to about [19,000 physicians](#) graduating from medical school per year, we may see these trends grow.”

Over the last 15 years, my group has trained over twenty newly graduated nonphysician providers (NPs and PAs) in our emergency departments. These colleagues developed into skilled clinicians and cherished friends. Like newly graduated medical students, none of them were ready to practice without close supervision immediately after school. To allow unsupervised practice of any clinician is dangerous for patients, for the clinician and for our friends neighbors and constituents.

I urge you to vote OUGHT NOT TO PASS on LD 295.

Please feel free to reach me on my cell phone (207.522.8028) at any time to discuss further.

Thank You.

Jay

Jay Mullen MD MBA FACEP

President and CEO

BlueWater Health

Immediate Past President, Maine Chapter ACEP

Chair, Legislative Committee, Maine Medical Association

Steering and Reimbursement Committees, ACEP

Chair, Democratic Group Practice Section, ACEP

E: [jmullen@bluewaterhealth.com](mailto:jmullen@bluewaterhealth.com)

P: 207.522.8028