

LETTER OF TESTIMONY
Linda Robinson, CNM
President, Maine Affiliate of American College of Nurse Midwives

IN SUPPORT OF LD 295 – An Act to Repeal Restrictions That Prohibit Certain Advanced Practice Registered Nurses from Providing Essential Health Care Services
BEFORE THE HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee,

My name is Linda Robinson, a nurse-midwife in Bar Harbor, and the current president of the Maine Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives. On behalf of the Maine Affiliate, I write in support of this legislation. I request that you also support this bill.

Because of its rural population, Maine has a challenging health care delivery history. Many of our citizens have difficulty accessing health care: poverty, travel times, and few providers make delivering services difficult. Nurses in advance practice are addressing this problem in all parts of the state, but there are barriers to providing this care. We have inconsistent Advance Practice Registered Nursing (APRN) regulation in Maine and this leads to difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified providers.

Nurse Midwives have independent practice privileges upon licensure in Maine. Nurse Anesthetists have independent practice upon licensure IF they work in a town of 10,000 persons or less. They require supervisor practice if they work in a town of 10,000 person or more, which is neither a professional nor a practical requirement. Nurse Practitioners currently require two-years of supervision in order to transition to practice (TTP). This, also, is neither a professional nor practical requirement.

Maine's TTP for Nurse Practitioners has been in place for 20 years, serving only as an unnecessary regulatory barrier to Nurse Practitioners providing healthcare to the citizens of Maine. This barrier limits Nurse Practitioner's placement within the state (particularly in rural and underserved areas) and deters Nurse Practitioners interested in moving to our state.

This supervisory restriction was lifted last March as part of the Governor's Emergency COVID legislation. If nurse practitioners are considered safe during a pandemic this restriction should be lifted permanently. Nurse practitioners are educated and certified to practice independently upon licensure.

Certified Nurse Practitioners far outnumber other nurses in advance practice in Maine. They are critical to the delivery of essential health care to our population. The restrictions they currently endure have no supporting evidence for safe practice. In other states where Nurse Practitioners enter independent practice upon licensure there is no evidence of safety issues. This restriction does not result in safer practice. This is well documented in states that do not have this restriction.

There is, however, evidence showing longer time frames to independent practice limits access to care in rural and underserved areas. This is most certainly a problem in Maine.

I urge you to support LD 295.

Thank you,

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