

I am a board certified physician, licensed in Maine, who practices Psychiatry. I am writing to express my strong opposition to Bill LD 295 which would allow nurse practitioners to see patients independently immediately upon graduation without any additional training or supervision. Such a change would neither expand access to healthcare nor be safe for the people of Maine.

Please do not sign on to Bill LD 295 or any other bill that would give nurse practitioners the authority to treat patients independently immediately upon graduation.

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

Bill LD 295 gets rid of this requirement and would make a newly graduated nurse practitioner the same under state law as a physician who has graduated from medical school and subsequently completed a minimum of 3 years of fully supervised training after medical school. Therefore, physicians do not have full decision-making authority for patients for at least 7 years after their first day of medical school!

Compare the number of patient-care hours required to become a licensed, independently practicing physician: Physicians like myself receive about 15,000 hours of training through medical school and residency. Nurse practitioners receive just 600 hours of patient care in their training.

The intense, extensive, and immersive patient care training that physicians receive during residency, after graduation from medical school, is invaluable. By opposing Bill LD 295, you will help to ensure that nurse practitioners continue to receive much-needed supervision for 24 months after graduation, which will help to keep healthcare safe for the residents of Maine.

Experience shows that there has been no real improvement in access to care, especially in rural areas, by granting independent practice to nurse practitioners, as has been done in states such as New Mexico. Allowing independent practice by nurse practitioners in Maine on day 1 after graduation will not increase access to care in rural Maine but will put the safety and well-being of Maine residents at risk.

I strongly urge you to oppose Bill LD 295.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Board Certified Psychiatrist

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