

Dental Center

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IN SUPPORT OF 25

“An Act to Modify the Qualifications for Resident Dentist Licensure.”

(Emergency)

Sponsored by Senator Brenner

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON

HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

April 27, 2021

Good morning Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and Members of the Committee. My name is Dr Jade Duncan, D.D.S., M.Ed. and I am the Dental Residency Director at Penobscot Community Health Care in Bangor Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on LD 25.

PCHC Dental Residency Program is a one-year Advanced Education in General Dentistry Residency Program that offers an educational experience for graduate dentists to refine and enhance their clinical skills while they provide comprehensive oral health care to patients in our dental health care facility. In addition, we prepare the resident to deliver dental care in a variety of models, including our school-based and homeless shelter settings.

Throughout our dental residency program, we provide a foundation for the role of the dentist as a member of a multi-disciplinary health care team and enhance interactions with both medical and dental colleagues to facilitate and improve total health.

LD 25 is a proposal submitted by the Maine Board of Dental Practice to further streamline the licensure qualifications in its statutes and rules by removing barriers to otherwise qualified applicants. Specifically, LD 25 proposes to amend the Dental Practice Act for resident dentist licensure as follows:

1. Amends the educational requirements for resident dentist licensure by authorizing the Board to consider the educational equivalent of a doctoral degree in dentistry on a case-by-case basis. Not all dentists enrolled in a residency program received a doctoral degree from a program accredited by the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (“CODA”). This statutory authority would allow the Board consider applicants seeking to obtain resident dentist licensure to obtain clinical, supervised experiences in some of Maine’s most underserved areas.
2. Amends the examination language to make clear that the only examination requirement is the Board’s jurisprudence examination. Under the current regulations both the national and the regional examinations for dentistry are required. There are some dentist residents that are attempting to qualify for access to those examinations by virtue of completing a CODA residency program. Again, this is an unnecessary requirement given the restrictions of the resident dentist license to practice under supervision of a dentist and in board approved settings to ensure appropriate public protection.

Last year we had significant delays onboarding our dental residents due to the existing barriers to licensure. The residents had to delay the start of their clinical experience for more than 3 months due to these barriers, thus affecting access to care for our community and patients. In addition, this made it very difficult to retain them as providers post-graduation based on their negative experience onboarding with the state, creating a brain-drain of highly qualified dental providers.

Additionally, we have had qualified applicants who wish to begin their residency training in Maine this summer, but do not meet either the CODA accreditation requirement or the national/regional examination requirement. Their options are either to forego their advanced training opportunity in Maine or navigate dental licensure in another state and then apply via the Board's endorsement provisions.

Traditionally our Dental Residency program has been a training ground for dental providers, some of whom ultimately remain in the state to provide much needed dental care to our communities. LD 25 will make this process much more efficient as well as create a more welcoming environment for out of state providers to choose Maine as a state to practice Dentistry.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Duncan

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