



**MAINE PHARMACY**  
ASSOCIATION

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March 16, 2023

The Honorable Donna Bailey, Chair  
The Honorable Anne Perry, Chair  
The Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

RE: Testimony in opposition of LD 2175, An Act to Improve Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs in Underserved Areas

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee:

My name is Amelia Arnold and I am a resident of Winthrop, Maine, a licensed pharmacist employed by Community Pharmacies and the Legislative Liaison for the Maine Pharmacy Association. The MPA is the state pharmacy organization that addresses the advocacy, continuing education and professional needs of all licensed pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and student pharmacists in Maine. Our mission is to promote public health by advocating for the profession of pharmacy. On behalf of the Maine Pharmacy Association, I am testifying today in opposition of LD 2175.

We are currently in a trying time in the pharmacy profession. As you have heard in this committee, pharmacists and pharmacy staff are being asked to do more with fewer resources. These pressures are apparent in both health systems and community pharmacies and while the causes of this are multifactorial, we think it's important to highlight some the perspectives of this bill so as not to add to the stressors in our profession.

This bill would have you set aside a significant amount of tax dollars to allow FQHCs to start up money to build pharmacies. We urge you to consider the following:

- While there are some FQHCs in communities that may not have pharmacy services, there are many others that are in areas that have one or more pharmacies. Would this money only be allocated to communities without a pharmacy? For instance, Waterville has a FQHC but has no less than 8 pharmacies already in the community.
- Why would these dollars only be set aside for FQHCs- what if a pharmacist wanted to open an independent pharmacy in their community but lacked the funds to do so? It feels as though incentivizing pharmacy care in rural and underserved communities should not only be available to FQHCs.
- What about the rural or underserved communities that would like to have pharmacy services but lack a FQHC? Would any funds be available for individuals to open a pharmacy? One could argue that areas without an FQHC may have even less access to care and, therefore, a greater need to bring a pharmacy to town to serve as a healthcare resource for those in the community.

We applaud the effort to ensure all Maine citizens can access pharmacy services, but as indicated, we have concerns about limiting such a large amount of money to organizations that are already receiving significant infusions of federal dollars while we hear from our independent members that they are struggling to stay solvent.

The Maine Pharmacy Association is happy to answer any questions and work with the committee on this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Most Sincerely,

Amelia Arnold, PharmD  
Legislative Liaison | Maine Pharmacy Association