

# MaineHealth

## MaineHealth Local Health Systems

Franklin Community  
Health Network  
LincolnHealth  
MaineHealth Care At Home  
Maine Behavioral Healthcare  
Memorial Hospital  
Maine Medical Center  
Mid Coast-Parkview Health  
NorDx  
Pen Bay Medical Center  
Southern Maine Health Care  
Synernet  
Waldo County General Hospital  
Western Maine Health

## Part of the MaineHealth Family

MaineHealth Accountable  
Care Organization

## MaineHealth Affiliates

MaineGeneral Health  
New England Rehabilitation  
Hospital of Portland  
St. Mary's Health System

## Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth in Support of

### **LD 612, “An Act to Recognize Occupational Licenses and Certifications from Other States to Attract New Residents and Businesses to Maine”**

**Tuesday, March 16, 2021**

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, I am Sarah Calder, Director of Government Affairs at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in support of LD 612, “An Act to Recognize Occupational Licenses and Certifications from Other States to Attract New Residents and Businesses to Maine.”

MaineHealth is Maine’s largest integrated non-profit health care system that provides the full continuum of health care services to the residents of eleven counties in Maine and one in New Hampshire. MaineHealth is also the state’s largest private employer with over 23,000 care team members, but we are facing significant workforce shortages and have invested heavily in creative and innovative solutions in an effort to fill the current 1,800 openings across the system. These programs cover a broad spectrum from developing entry level employees in front line positions from Environmental Services to training tomorrow’s physicians.

Like many rural states, Maine faces a shortage of healthcare professionals and this shortage presents particular challenges as we seek ways to improve the health of our rural communities. These challenges are compounded by having the oldest population in the nation. In fact, over the next decade, MaineHealth estimates that the population within its service area will experience less than one percent growth while the number of individuals 65 or older will increase by 25 percent. It truly is a perfect storm – a large percentage of our workforce is nearing retirement at a time that our rapidly aging patient population will require more health care services.

While recruitment is a challenge across our system, it is particularly challenging in our more rural service areas. In fact, Pen Bay Medical Center in Rockport currently has an 11% vacancy rate and LincolnHealth in Damariscotta has an 8% vacancy rate. As we work to recruit out-of-state health care professionals to these rural areas (and even the more

urban areas, like Portland), we struggle to help their spouses or partners find career placements, which can often lead to the individual declining our employment offer. The legislation before you today could help to address these two challenges that we face – filling our own vacancies, but also helping to ease the challenges for a trailing spouse or partner that is seeking to transfer their licensure to Maine.

Legislative action is needed if we're going to be successful in meeting the increased workforce demands. It is imperative that we look at innovative programs and policy changes that support, attract and retain individuals new to the State in order to address this shortage.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.