



**Northern Light
Health**

**LD 703 An Act to Establish a Health Care Gap Year Program for Recent College
Graduates**

**Testimony in Support
March 12, 2025**

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Committee on Labor, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN. I am providing submitting testimony in support of this bill on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with more than 10,000 employees statewide.

Supported by a grant from the Maine Department of Labor, Northeastern's Roux Institute and Bouvé College of Health Sciences have partnered with Maine's healthcare systems and community health clinics to host a Post-Baccalaureate, Pre-Clinical Gap Year program. This innovative non-degree program allows aspiring healthcare professionals to gain valuable experience in providing direct patient care or essential behind-the-scenes services.

Northern Light Health has been involved in the Gap Year Program since its inception. This year we have 5 participants placed in Bangor, Blue Hill, and Portland who have taken entry-level clinical positions to gain training and experience in preparation for furthering their healthcare careers. Participants report that the program's housing stipend, career support, and networking opportunities greatly enhance their ability to gain firsthand, frontline practice and plan for their future training and roles. Our goal in participating in this program is to use it as one of many tactics to deliver quality patient care while providing valuable opportunities for those who intend to further their training and credentials in the hope that their experience at Northern Light Health and in Maine will influence them to stay or return once they've completed their graduate work.

This bill provides \$500,000 in one time funding for the healthcare Gap Year Program. We are in full support of this legislation.

Thank you.

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Northern Light Health

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C.A. Dean Hospital
Eastern Maine Medical Center
Home Care & Hospice
Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Northern Light Pharmacy
Sebasticook Valley Hospital