

State of Maine | 131st Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services
Testimony of Hannah A. Hudson on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
February 6, 2024

Supporting:
LD 2140, "An Act to Enact the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact"

Sponsored by Representative Crafts

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, I am Hannah Hudson, Director of Policy at Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA).

MPCA is a membership organization representing Maine's Community Health Centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Maine's CHCs make up the largest independent primary care network in the state, providing high quality and equitable primary and preventive medical, behavioral, and dental health services for over 200,000 people (1 in 6 Mainers) at more than 80 service delivery sites around the State.

Community Health Centers are at the forefront of delivering care to rural and underserved Maine communities. They provide all patients with comprehensive primary care services, as well as a host of other services that include transportation, translation, and case management services, among others. They are further required to provide this care without regard to a patient's insurance status or ability to pay.

MPCA is supportive of LD 2140 and we thank Representative Crafts for bringing forward legislation that proposes to enact the Social Work Licensure Compact. Eliminating the need for licenses in multiple states by providing for the mutual recognition of other member state licenses would help address workforce shortages that are impacting access to care throughout the state.

Maine's CHCs have long felt the impacts of primary care workforce shortages. Rural areas, in particular, are continuing to experience critical challenges with access to care. Some commonly identified issues specific to our CHCs are increased retirements due to an aging workforce; wage inflation and competition; difficulty hiring, recruiting, and retaining clinical and support staff; and a dire need for more primary care physicians, RNs, and behavioral health clinicians, including Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs). LD 2140 takes a step toward eliminating a barrier faced by an out-of-state qualified clinician that is interested in working in Maine.

On behalf of Maine's Community Health Centers, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at hudson@mepca.org with any follow up questions.

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