

Harrington Family
Health Center



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April 28, 2017

Re: LD 1287, "An Act to Strengthen Efforts to Recruit and Retain Primary Care Professionals and Dentists in Rural and Underserved Areas Across the State".

Senator Dow, Representative Tipping and members of the Committee on Taxation.

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors for the Harrington Family Health Center to express their concerns regarding the availability of health care professionals in health centers here in Washington County.

LD 1287 provides a tax credit for medical professionals in exchange for their work providing services to the residents here in the county. The Board not only supports re-authorizing the tax credit to five doctors, but adding another five and dentists as well. Years ago the State of Maine forgave student loans to new teachers willing to work two years in the more rural areas of the state to address teacher shortages. There is a shortage of primary care physicians and dentists in rural areas of the state now.

Too many residents drive hours from Washington County to receive health care. Health centers serve to alleviate those hours on the road; make needed medical care more accessible; and provide for family involvement in the care of other family members. A tax credit has been shown to be an incentive for medical professionals to come to a rural area to provide services. When anyone sees Washington County first-hand, they are more inclined to stay and continue with their careers.

The Board is mindful of the statistics regarding the county and need not enumerate them here. LD 1287 and its potential to address an on-going need in Washington County cannot be underestimated.

Sincerely,

Betsy Fitzgerald

President, Harrington Family Health Center Board