



**Northern Light
Health**

LD 1797 An Act to Expand Maine's Health Care Workforce by Expanding Educational Opportunities and Providing Tax Credits

**Testimony in Support
May 2, 2023**

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Dr. James Jarvis M.D. I am the Medical Director of Clinical Education at Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, and I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations speaking in support of this bill.

This bill establishes the Maine Health Care Education Training and Medical Residency Fund, invests in loan repayment support for nursing faculty and health professionals, supports clinical preceptorships and establishes a tax credit to support new nurses in the first 3 years of practice. Combined these investments will significantly address the critical needs for doctors, nurses and other health professionals to care for the people of Maine.

Despite the work being done at EMMC and other health centers and systems across the state to train the next generation of physicians, the current physician workforce shortage is only going to become worse unless some fundamental changes are made for the availability of medical school and residency opportunities to Mainers interested in pursuing medicine as a career. According to a 2018 report from the Center for Health Workforce Studies, nearly 43% of Maine's physicians were over the age of 55. That number rises to over 50% in our most rural counties.

According to the Graham Center and the American Medical Association, we know that more than half of practicing physicians work within 100 miles of where they trained either in medical school or residency. Under a grant from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, a collaboration between Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, Maine Medical Center, Central Maine Medical Center, and the Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency Program was created with a mission to increase the number of clinical rotations in rural Maine communities for residents and fellows in accredited graduate medical education programs. While this work is just beginning, we have already built the framework for five new sites, create training programs for faculty at these and future sites, and expand education in social determinants of health and inclusion. This collaborative will serve as a model for future initiatives, but only if funding is available to sustain and grow such opportunities.

We also know that Maine has a shortage of registered nurses, progress is being made but we still do not have the number of new nursing graduates needed each year to fill positions needed to meet increased need for nursing care and replace nurses retiring from the profession. Resolving the nursing shortage is a partnership between hospitals/health systems in Maine and our nursing education programs. Throughout

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Northern Light Health

Acadia Hospital
A.R. Gould Hospital
Beacon Health
Blue Hill Hospital
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 Laboratory
Northern Light Pharmacy
Sebasticook Valley Hospital

Northern Light Health we are making significant investments supporting nursing education including:

- Partnerships with every nursing program in Maine to support on site clinical experiences providing 200,000 training hours for students annually.
- Northern Light Health nurses serve as adjunct faculty and clinical preceptors for the nursing education programs. Northern Light Health financial impact exceeds \$500,000.
- Four Northern Light Hospitals (Mayo, CA Dean, Sebecook Valley and Maine Coast Hospitals) provide rural education via the EMCC RN Satellite program. Northern Light Health local masters prepared staff serve as faculty for the RN students to complete their associate degree education on site at the hospital.
- Community College Public Private Partnership to double the number of nursing graduates from 240 to 480 students annually. Leveraging \$2.5 million in state funding with \$1.25 million each from Northern Light Health and Maine Health.
- Nursing simulation center at Northern Light Inland Hospital in partnership with Purdue Global School of Nursing
- Working with the Community Colleges to expand LPN nursing education
- Nursing Sponsorships – Support nurses in the final years of education with tuition and full-time benefits with pay

Resolving the nursing shortage also requires state investments and we thank all of you for your support for loan repayment for nursing faculty and health professions. This bill continues these investments into the future.

We ask that you support this important legislation. Thank you.