

Snow, Veronica

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To: HCIFS
Subject: In support of LD 364

April 8, 2019

Testimony in Support of LD 364

"An act to establish the right to practice complementary and alternative health care act"

Senator Sandborn, Representative Tepler, and Members on the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Melissa Sawyer, I live in South Portland and am certified in Polarity Therapy ('02), Attunement ('19) and I am a third year student of Homeopathy here in Portland with a graduation expected in 2020. I have lived and worked in Maine most of my life and owned a restaurant in Portland until 2014. I am writing to you to share my support for LD 364 and the right to both practice complementary and alternative health care as well as be a consumer of complementary and alternative health care as I see helpful to my family.

I have always tried to be a "healthy" person and choose things for my life that support my ability to eat well, be thoughtful to both my mental/emotional well being and my physical one, and to help others who feel similar in mindset to make healthy choices in their life experience as well.

The first time I ever tried a homeopathic remedy I remember I was 16 and I had food poisoning. I was so sick for hours and I was exhausted. I called my aunt who was a nurse and she said for me to try Arsenicum Album, a homeopathic remedy (I had never heard of it) and it should do the trick. Well, it worked within 15 minutes and if you have ever had food poisoning before, you would know what a life saver it was! She was a firm believer in mixing allopathic care and holistic care.

My life pretty much stayed on that path from that moment on. I attended USM as well as what is now Spatech to receive my Polarity certification in 2002. I used that modality to help women find balance in body and mind through labor and birth. I lived in Harrison at the time and belonged to networking groups with birthing mothers from Birthwise in Bridgton. I had my own son at home with the help of Polarity and midwives in 2004, and was frequent to receiving Reiki sessions after being in a car accident in my early 20's.

As my interest in alternative care grew I continued studies in culinary and dietary needs. I became the co-owner of a local restaurant that catered to vegan/vegetarian cuisine and organic meat dishes. This allowed me the opportunity to combine my holistic approach to self care and nourishing the body with food as a platform to give back to my community as well. We donated time, energy and resources to No child Hungry and educational programs about nutrition to help low income families make healthy choices for themselves. We provided wellness seminars and fundraisers for local schools and charities to better the lives of Maine people. We were a local business and to this day I feel it necessary to help support local business and small business owners as a consumer. Our complementary and alternative therapy practitioners are just that, small business owners who give back to their communities with compassion and support.

Most recently, in October of last year I lost my aunt at age 61. She had been diagnosed with diabetes as a teen and spent most of her life on insulin. She lost feeling in her feet, had her toes amputated, broke legs and ankles, and had surgeries for her kidneys all while traditional medicine tried desperately to improve her quality of life. She had been on dialysis for almost five years and suffered a stroke back in June. After her stroke I helped her with homeopathic remedies to recover from small infections and acute ailments her body was not strong enough to overcome. We paired her allopathic care with homeopathic care to assist in the last stages of her life. She entered Gosnell House Hospice in Scarborough, in October after dialysis was no longer effective and within days passed away. She was a fighter, she was strong and brave and wonderful and it was one of the hardest losses I have ever faced. Our time at Gosnell was a difficult one but the team there were unbeatable. One of the last days we had with her, I was so moved to see a Reiki master enter the facility and set up a table in one of the small waiting rooms and offer her services to family/friends of those passing. It was amazing to see the two medical communities acknowledge each other during traumatic times such as death and let each one have a place in the process.

At the beginning of this year I received my certification in Attunement and focus on that modality now as well as my homeopathic studies. I have found a wonderful community here that helps me and my family live the best and healthiest life possible. I would like to be able to continue my studies and earn a living in these modalities openly in Maine. With this legislation we can protect safe practices by securing the right to practice without a medical license. Please vote in favor of LD 364, the choice should be ours as individuals to decide what kind of health practices we want for ourselves and our families...and I choose alternative therapy for mine. Even if some of these practices are unknown or new to you, trust me in knowing that there are large numbers of consumers and practitioners who have been safely using them for years and would like to continue to do so right here in our own state. I appreciate your time and consideration.

In kindness and health,
Melissa Sawyer