

MaineHealth

MaineHealth Member Organizations:

Franklin Community Health Network
LincolnHealth
MaineHealth Care At Home
Maine Behavioral Healthcare Memorial Hospital
Maine Medical Center
NorDx
Pen Bay Medical Center
Southern Maine Health Care
Synernet
Waldo County General Hospital
Western Maine Health

Part of the MaineHealth Family:

MaineHealth Accountable Care Organization

MaineHealth Affiliates:

MaineGeneral Health
Mid Coast-Parkview Health
New England Rehabilitation Hospital of Portland
St. Mary's Health System

Testimony of Kayla Harris, PharmD

PGY1 Pharmacy Resident

Maine Medical Center

February 14, 2019

In Support of LD 267

“An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Practice of Pharmacy”

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Kayla Harris and I am currently a pharmacy resident at Maine Medical Center, and I am here to testify in strong support of LD 267 “An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Practice of Pharmacy.”

I am a homegrown “Mainah” who was born and raised in a quiet town in what is fondly known by other Mainers as “The County.” Like many of my peers in northern Maine, I grew up working in the fields during school breaks, developing the infamous traits of a hardworking Mainer.

When I was 15 years old, a mentor told me about the world of pharmacy. She described pharmacists as medication experts, trained to educate patients on drug therapies and design personalized medication regimens for them. She explained to me that, as a pharmacist, I would be able to use the scientific concepts I found most exciting to help others achieve optimal health. I was sold and immediately set my sights on becoming a pharmacist.

I was accepted into the accelerated pre-pharmacy program at UNE along with approximately 100 other pre-pharmacy students, all with the same goal of making it into graduate school, a feat only about 1/3 of these students would achieve. The course-load during those two years as an undergraduate student was intense and challenging. I fought tirelessly for near perfect grades to ensure that I was prepared for graduate school. After the UNE College of Pharmacy had reviewed my application, they extended an offer to me for a day-long interview where they asked me many questions about how I planned to shape the profession of pharmacy and provide optimal care for my future patients.

I spent the next four years in pharmacy school, where I was challenged to learn about medicines and their appropriate use. The curriculum taught me

about medicine characteristics like how quickly a drug works and how quickly its effects wear off, how the body breaks it down and what happens if the body's organs are not able to do so. I learned about drug classes and how each individual drug has different effects on the body. I was taught about medication side effects, everything from what patients might consider mild or annoying to those that could cause death or disability. I was taught how to measure blood pressures, heart rates, perform foot exams and administer vaccines. I was asked to interpret laboratory values and gather a history from a patient to develop a comprehensive care plan. Working with students from other healthcare professions, I learned about how to optimize interprofessional communication and I came to understand my role as the pharmacist on the healthcare team. In my final year of pharmacy school, I engaged in direct patient care through clinical rotations within many different areas of pharmacy. In each of these settings, the most profound lesson that I learned was how important the pharmacist was in providing patient care and how much the healthcare team relied upon the education and skills of the pharmacist.

To advance my practice further upon graduation, I submitted myself to the highly competitive pharmacy residency application process. I was fortunate enough to be "matched" with Maine Medical Center where I have spent the last 8 months soaking up as much pharmacy knowledge as possible, working extremely long days providing patient care, and conducting research that will impact patients within the hospital and beyond. Upon completion of my first year of residency training in June, I will begin my second year of postgraduate residency training at Maine Medical Center, specializing in the provision of care in outpatient, ambulatory settings. Through this year-long training program, I will cultivate skills in the management of chronic conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure and hold the qualifications necessary to care for these patients in my career.

Once I have finished my second year of post graduate training, I will have dedicated 8 laborious years of my life to honing the craft of providing care through the practice of pharmacy. The Doctorate of Pharmacy I have earned in Maine and the residency training I will have completed in Maine provide me with the skills to serve our community and improve the health and wellbeing of our fellow Mainers as the medication expert on the healthcare team. Maine is a rural state with an aging population and needs

the help of pharmacists like myself to aid in managing complex medication regimens. LD 267 is a logical step in that direction. Therefore, I ask the committee to vote Ought to Pass on this legislation so that I may be recognized as a provider of healthcare services and be better equipped to serve the needs of my home state. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.