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***24 Years of Independent Practice as Healthcare Providers for the People of Maine***

March 13, 2019

Senator Millett, Representative Kornfield  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education

My name is Pamela Cahill, I live in Woolwich, Maine and come before you today as the Executive Director of the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association in support LD 798, *An Act to Protect Maine Children and Students from Preventable Diseases by Repealing Certain Exemptions from the Laws Governing Immunization Requirements*.

In 1995 a law was passed giving NPs the right to practice as Advanced Practice Register Nurses (APRNs) and today there are 1921 NPs licensed to practice in Maine.

MNPA's Board of Directors, and Legislative Committee, has deliberated through robust discussion on how to best address improving the health of Maine's children and community pertaining to preventable diseases. We believe immunization is the foundation of preventing and eradicating communicable diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, polio, chicken pox, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis. The recent increased outbreaks of measles in our country are alarming, creating urgency to act and MNPA's support for this legislation.

As Nurse Practitioners our members pride themselves on their ability to educate and connect with patients and community. MNPA fully recognizes that not everyone in Maine supports removing the exemptions in this bill. It is our hope, regardless of the bill's outcome, that we can continue to have dialogue and communication with all members of our community, including those who oppose this legislation today. We believe that the best way to address and improve the issue of immunization is through the inclusion of all patients with ongoing education, open discussion, and collaboration with provider and patient.

MNPA suggests the following technical amendment to maintain consistent definitions in Maine statutes:

Sec. 4 of the bill is amended to read:

A. The department shall adopt rules regarding the health of staff as required to protect the health and safety of the children. The rules must include a requirement that every 2 years each licensee, administrator or other staff member of the nursery school who provides care for children be declared free from communicable disease by a ~~licensed physician~~ licensed health care provider.

We feel that LD 798 addresses the immediate medical and public health need to protect the citizens of Maine from extremely dangerous but preventable communicable diseases. We urge you to vote Ought to Pass As amended on LD 798

At this time, MNPA takes no position on LD 987 *An Act to Provide Autonomy for Health Care Providers to Practice Patient-centered Care by Amending the Laws Governing Medical Exemptions to Immunization Requirements*.

While we believe the sponsors of the bill are well intended, and we applaud the bill's use of the term "health care provider" but we are not sure what issue this bill attempts to address.

MNPA looks forward to working with all interested parties to make our schools and communities safe.

Sincerely yours,

Pamela Cahill, Executive Director