

126th Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 20

Senator Christopher Johnson
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0003
(207) 287-1515

3230 Turner Ridge Road
Somerville, ME 04348
Home (207) 549-3358

Testimony of Senator Chris Johnson on behalf of Ina Brann of Windsor in support of LD
171, An Act To Facilitate the Licensing of International Mail Order Prescription
Pharmacies by the Maine Board of Pharmacy - February 19, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Patrick, Representative Herbig, members of the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development Committee. I am Senator Chris Johnson, representing State Senate District 20, and today I am here to share the words of constituent Ina Brann of Windsor, who could not be here today because she would have to find someone to care for her mother in order to do so.

Ina wrote me requesting a bill that would allow the CanaRx prescription "MaineMeds" program to operate in the State of Maine, and when I informed her of LD 171 she asked that I share her story with you today:

I have retired from the State of Maine in order to care for my mother at home. Because I took an early retirement, half of my monthly pension goes to pay for health insurance for my husband, who requires medication. Fortunately, in May 2012, we were informed of a program that provided his prescriptions without the tiered co-pay which is currently \$70.00 for some name brand drugs. However, in August 2012 we were notified that due to a decision by the Maine Attorney General, the Maine Meds program was suspended.

According to the letter we received, the MaineMeds program was suspended because the current Maine statutes require that pharmacies participating in the program need to be licensed by the Board of Pharmacy, and the current statutes do not give them the authority to license pharmacies outside the United States. Also according to the letter, the CanaRx international pharmacies located in Tier One countries (designated and recognized by Congress as equivalent to US safety standards) are fully licensed in their countries. The medications which my husband received were name brand, and required no co-pay. At a time when the cost of living is constantly rising due to the price of gas, fuel, and groceries, we were very grateful to get quality medicine without a costly co-payment.

If the MaineMeds program which was operated by CanaRx could be restored, it would be very helpful to us and to many others who had taken advantage of this helpful program.

-- Yours truly,

Ina M. Brann
Windsor ME

Those are Ina's words. But I would like to add that I find a great deal of common sense in Ina's words. In the face of declining retirement benefits and escalating medical and living costs, this is one thing we can do to help people like Ina, her husband, and the mother she cares for, make ends meet.

On behalf of myself and my constituent, thank you for listening and giving her story due consideration.