

TESTIMONY OF GORDON SMITH, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 101, AN ACT TO EXTEND THE OPERATION OF THE MAINE HEALTH DATA
PROCESSING CENTER AND TO AMEND THE MAINE HEALTH DATA
ORGANIZATION STATUTES,

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
FEBRUARY 3, 2009

Senator Brannigan, Representative Perry, Members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Gordon Smith, Executive Vice President of the Maine Medical Association, speaking today in favor of L.D. 101 – An Act to Extend the Operation of the Maine Health Data Processing Center and to Amend the Statutes of the Maine Health Data Organization. For those of you new to the committee, the Maine Medical Association is a professional association representing the interests of over 3100 Maine physicians, residents and medical students.

Mr. Prysunka has done a nice job of summarizing the purpose of each of the provisions of the legislation so I will certainly not repeat that testimony. Suffice it to say that the Association believes that the Maine Health Data Processing Center, (MHDPC), similar to the MHDO itself, has served an important purpose and is constituted to represent both public and private stakeholders. We support allowing the organization to continue its work and to have interested individuals serve up to ten years. The organization has been very successful in its work and is well positioned to solicit business in other states and thereby reduce the expense to participating funders in Maine. I recently had an opportunity to speak to a national group of my colleagues and physician leaders across the country on the all-payer claims database. With a dozen states already committed to creating such a database, the opportunities for more out of state work are considerable. I was very pleased with the interest in such databases of the attendees at this national meeting.

Having served as the first Chair of the MHDO Board in the early 1990's, I am also pleased to be able to support the remaining sections of the bill as well. I think it makes a lot of sense to include on the Board representatives of the Dirigo Health Agency and the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation. We also support the changes in the disclosure provisions to allow for more transparency. We have not found the existing provisions in 22 MRSA 1718 to be particularly helpful to consumers and believe that the proposed provision requiring hospitals and surgical centers to provide, upon request, the charge for any service offered at the facility, to be more helpful.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these brief comments and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.