

**TESTIMONY OF GORDON H. SMITH, ESQ, EVP,
THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
FEBRUARY 1, 2011**

**IN SUPPORT OF
THE NOMINATION OF MARY MAYHEW AS COMMISSIONER OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES**

Senator McCormick, Representative Strang-Burgess and members of the Committee, I am Gordon Smith, Executive Vice President of the Maine Medical Association and I am pleased to have the opportunity on behalf of the Association and its 3500 members to support the Governor's nomination of Mary Mayhew as Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services. Maine's physicians rely on the Department every day to handle claims for 300,000 MaineCare patients, to license and regulate hospitals, nursing facilities and many other health facilities and to operate the Maine CDC. It is certainly not an overstatement to say that the Department of Health and Humans Services is as important to physicians as it is to the thousands of Maine citizens that receive services in the areas of health, mental health or social services.

On a personal level, I have known Mary Mayhew for over ten years and worked with her closely in connection with her work at the Maine Hospital Association. Physicians don't always agree with hospitals, but I have always found Mary to be professional, transparent and very effective. She is highly intelligent and has a great work ethic. She has the attributes that are needed in leading and managing this large department. She also knows health care – and knows the health care landscape in Maine

from Fort Kent to Kittery and from Eastport to Bethel. She has experience in dealing with the issues facing the Department.

I have had an opportunity to talk with Mary about her plans for the Department, and was pleased to hear her articulate a goal of improving the relationships between providers and the Department.

It is important for healthcare providers to feel that their work is appreciated and valued. It is also important for clients of the Department to be treated with respect and kindness. Mary wants to improve relationships and build an environment where there is a culture of mutual respect.

The association is pleased that the Governor has chosen a well-qualified individual within the state to lead the Department. I hope you will let her begin her new position with your unanimous support and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.