



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

**IN SUPPORT OF**

**L.D. 503, AN ACT TO CONTINUE THE DOCTORS FOR MAINE'S FUTURE  
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Joint Standing Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Economic Development  
Room 208, Cross State Office Building, Augusta, Maine  
Tuesday, March 21, 2017, 1:00 p.m.

Good afternoon Senator Volk, Representative Fecteau, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research, & Economic Development. My name is Gordon H. Smith and I serve as Executive Vice President of the Maine Medical Association. I am pleased to offer testimony in support of L.D. 503, *An Act to Continue the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program*.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine citizens.

The MMA enthusiastically supports this initiative by Senator Katz, Representative Hymanson, and the co-sponsors of L.D. 503 and applauds the work of Dr. Peter Bates and his colleagues at the Maine Medical Center and the Tufts University School of Medicine, Maine Track Program to address Maine's health workforce shortage. Maine's health workforce shortage, and physician shortage in particular, have been exacerbated by the lack of a public medical school as part of its state university system. For many years, the MMA has been part of a group of public and private entities working collaboratively to ensure that talented Maine students have an opportunity to pursue a medical education and then build careers serving the people of Maine. Initially, Maine accomplished the goal of ensuring a medical education for some Maine students through an interstate compact subsidizing access to several medical schools in New England for Maine students. In 2009, the 124<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature made a substantial investment in medical education for Maine students with the establishment of the

*Doctors for Maine's Future Program*. Passage of L.D. 503 would represent another significant investment in medical education in our state.

As examples of MMA members' concern about Maine's health workforce shortage and for ensuring opportunities for Maine students to pursue a medical education, I have attached **Resolution #3**, *To Encourage Maine Students to Pursue Careers in Medicine*, adopted at the MMA's 2006 Annual Session and **Resolution #1**, *Maine Medical Student Education* adopted at the MMA's 2007 Annual Session. MMA members adopted the latter in anticipation of legislation creating the *Doctors for Maine's Future Program*.

Lastly, I would like to mention the MMA's long-standing contribution to medical education for Maine students. The MMA's IRC §501(c)(3) affiliate, the *Maine Medical Education Foundation*, makes low interest loans to medical students from Maine or with a substantial connection to Maine with the hope that they will spend their medical careers serving the people of Maine. Since its inception, this Foundation has loaned more than \$5 million in support of medical education in our state.

Thank you for considering MMA's testimony in support of L.D. 503.

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**Maine Medical Association**  
**Resolution RE: Careers in Medicine**  
**DRAFT: August 2006**

**Resolution #3: To Encourage Maine Students to Pursue Careers in Medicine,  
submitted by Jacob Gerritsen, MD, President:**

**WHEREAS**, the State of Maine remains the 49<sup>th</sup> among states in the nation in the percentage of college graduates who apply to medical school; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine citizens face a severe shortage of physicians in the coming years as a result of a number of factors, including a rapidly aging population; and

**WHEREAS**, students from Maine have traditionally shied away from careers as physicians for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- the high cost of medical education,
- the rigorous demands of professional training,
- the competitiveness of graduate medical education,
- the duration of education and training; and

**WHEREAS**, programs aimed at increasing the aspirations of Maine's youth in the fields of science have not been successful in reversing this trend,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Maine Medical Association establish a program aimed at encouraging its members to visit middle school and high school science classrooms in their areas to encourage students to pursue careers in medicine, and establish a program of in-office mentoring for interested students, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Maine Medical Association, through its publications and other means, inform members and the public of the need to encourage and assist Maine's youth in pursuing careers in medicine, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Committee on Loan and Trust Administrative review this issue and report back to the membership and MMA Executive Committee on the ways the Maine Medical Education Foundation could be more involved in encouraging these activities.

Fiscal Note: \$2,000 (To come from MMA Committee Budget)

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**Maine Medical Association**  
**Resolution RE: Support of Maine Medical Students**  
**DRAFT: August 2007**

**Resolution #1: Maine Medical Student Education, submitted by the MMA Executive Committee:**

**WHEREAS**, The State of Maine has a shortage of physicians and projections are that this shortage will increase; and

**WHEREAS**, it has been shown that physicians are most likely to practice in locations where they do their undergraduate and graduate medical education; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine students who graduate from college are the least likely in the country to enter medical school of all 50 states due to access and cost concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine is one of only 6 states in the country without a state supported allopathic medical school and 4 of those states are in a consortium, leaving only Maine and Delaware; and

**WHEREAS**, the current FAME medical access program does not help our Maine medical students get a break on their tuition but only helps them secure a place in medical school;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Maine Medical Association support any legislative action that would result in Maine students being able to attend medical school in their own state at less cost than is currently the case.