



Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth
In Support of LD 2071, “An Act to Expand Access to Vaccines Approved by
the United States Food and Drug Administration by Allowing Pharmacists to
Prescribe, Dispense and Administer Vaccines and Require Insurance
Coverage”
February 10, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Sarah Calder, Senior Government Affairs Director at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in support of the amended version of LD 2071, “An Act to Expand Access to Vaccines Approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration by Allowing Pharmacists to Prescribe, Dispense and Administer Vaccines and Require Insurance Coverage.”

MaineHealth is an integrated non-profit health care system that provides a continuum of health care services to communities throughout Maine and New Hampshire. Every day, our over 24,000 care team members support our vision of “Working Together so Our Communities are the Healthiest in America” by providing a range of services from primary and specialty physician services to a continuum of behavioral health care services, community and tertiary hospital care, home health care, a lab, and retail and specialty pharmacy services.

This amendment thoughtfully preserves access to FDA-approved vaccines while maintaining appropriate safeguards, coordination, and clinical standards. Vaccination remains one of the most effective public health tools for preventing serious illness and protecting vulnerable populations—particularly children, older adults, and individuals with chronic conditions.

As you heard from the sponsor, this amendment does the following:

- Ensures insurance coverage of immunizations licensed by the FDA and consistent with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians or the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, providing certainty as federal policy shifts.
- Allows a pharmacist to prescribe and dispense those same vaccines to adults.
- Allows a pharmacist to prescribe and dispense flu and COVID vaccines to anyone over the age of 6 months.
- Clarifies that a pharmacist can administer, with a valid prescription, a vaccine approved by the FDA and consistent with the recommendations of those medical associations to anyone over the age of 3 years.
- Clarifies that at the direction of a pharmacist, a pharmacy intern can administer vaccines to the same patient populations as a pharmacist.

- Removes the outdated requirement that a pharmacist notify the person's primary care provider within 72 hours of administering a vaccine, as this information is required to be reported in the state immunization information reporting system.

This amendment strikes an important balance between expanding access and ensuring patient safety and clinical appropriateness. It provides a framework that prioritizes clinically grounded vaccine recommendations and protects timely and affordable access to recommended vaccines for individuals who want them. Additionally, as the health care system faces increasing financial and workforce pressures, this bill expands safe and necessary access to vaccines by allowing pharmacists to help meet patient demand.

For these reasons, MaineHealth supports the sponsor's amendment to LD 2071 and appreciates the Committee's consideration of this measured approach. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.