



**Testimony of Marge Kilkelly on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial
Services**

**In Favor of LD 239 - An Act to Allow Retail Pharmacies to
Operate Remote Dispensing Sites in Rural Areas**

Submitted January 31, 2025

Greetings, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and the members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services.

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am a Policy Consultant for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 135 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings.

I am testifying in favor of LD 239 *An Act to Allow Retail Pharmacies to Operate Remote Dispensing Sites in Rural Areas*.

Access to pharmacy services is a critical part of the health care continuum. According to a Rural Health Information Hub (RHlhub) January 2025 report, pharmacists are often the health care provider who is seen most frequently by patients. Rural Medicare patients had, on average, 14 visits with the pharmacist and 5 with their Primary Care Provider (PCP).

This bill creatively addresses the need for accessibility by creating remote dispensing sites and requires that patients have the opportunity to discuss their questions with a licensed pharmacist via telehealth services. For older rural Mainers, who may see multiple health care providers/specialists the pharmacist is the front line advisor on drug side effects and drug interactions.

With drug costs being a critical issue for all patients, pharmacists can often assist patients in understanding the health insurance options that can provide optimum coverage based on a patient's prescription needs; manufacturer rebates or discounts.

Mail order pharmacies are an option for some, however, not everyone has either the available technology or ability to do online ordering and some prescriptions need to be provided as quickly as possible. In addition, the deficiencies in USPS deliveries can delay critical drugs which can lead to a health crisis.

Adherence to medication is a primary determinant of treatment success. When a patient does not adhere to a prescription the medications are less effective, symptoms worsen and health complications are common. The result is a lower quality of life, lower productivity and often a need for costlier interventions.

While the cost of drugs is a factor in adherence, the cost of getting to the pharmacy to fill a prescription is also a significant factor. Older Mainers who may depend on others for transportation or workers who commute long distances for employment are particularly impacted by a lack of local pharmacy services.

Rural Mainers need pharmacy access and I urge you to support of LD 239.

Thank you for your consideration.