

**Testimony of  
Brenda White, BSN, RN, MS  
Maine Association of School Nurses – Board of Directors  
School Nurse – FHS, RSU No.5**

**In Opposition to L.D. 1491  
An Act to Allow Trained, Nonmedical Employees in Schools to  
Administer Emergency Medications  
Sponsored by Representative Justin Chenette  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs  
January 11, 2016**

Senator Langley, Representative Kornfield, & Members of the Committee:

My name is Brenda White. I am a full time practicing School Nurse and I am testifying in opposition to LD1491.

As a Licensed RN, I have worked for 8 years as a Public Health Nurse and 31 years as a School Nurse; 28 of those years were with PreK-5 students. Through that experience I can confidently state that care of a child in their own home by family or friends is NOT the same as employees providing care in the school setting; and the resources available in a school setting for health emergencies, are certainly NOT the same as in an acute care setting. What is safe in one setting may not be safe in another for the same child.

Every school year there are several students with potentially life threatening diagnoses, such as severe Food Allergies, Asthma, and Diabetes. With the physician's order, the School Nurse develops an EMERGENCY CARE PLAN (ECP) for administration of prescribed Emergency Medications, such as an EpiPen for Anaphylaxis, a Rescue Inhaler for an Asthma attack, or Glucagon if a Low Blood Sugar results in the student becoming unconscious. I annually train appropriate unlicensed school personnel to administer these emergency medications within the current state Medication Law.

In addition, there are many other students with chronic or complex medical conditions, such as diabetes and seizure disorders; or sudden illness, such as cancer, that require coordination of their daily care needs, treatments, and/or medications necessary during the school day. The School Nurse develops an INDIVIDUAL HEALTH PLAN (IHP) for each of these students specific to their care needs, the setting, and the resources. The student may also be referred for 504 Plan Accommodations, or an IEP (education plan) along with an IHP.

As the School Nurse it is my job to develop the ECP and the IHP with input from the physician and family. The School Nurse is the only Health Professional in the school setting who can develop the IHP or ECP. The School Nurse has the knowledge to understand the student's diagnosis, know each medication and its side effects (such as respiratory distress), assess & monitor changes in student's condition, evaluate needs, recognize the skills necessary to provide safe care, identify the potential risks/barriers to implementing

the plan within the school setting, and know the resources in-school and in the community for responding to an emergency, ie availability of EMTs or Paramedics. The decision to delegate health care tasks is a serious responsibility that a School Nurse makes on a case-by-case basis, considering the safety of each student, staff, and the broader school community.

As a licensed professional, I first work within the parameters Maine Nurse Practice Act. As a school employee, I am responsible to work within District Policy & Procedures; and also under the Department of Education rules, regulations, and guidelines under Maine Laws. The Standards of School Nurse Practice from the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) informs and reinforces my daily practice. Under current law and best practice, the School Nurse (not the SAU) makes the final decisions related to accepting medications, training unlicensed personnel, and delegation of tasks.

This is what a Professional School Nurse does during a typical school day throughout a typical school year “to protect the lives and health of students in this State”. We save lives through coordination and oversight whenever delegation is appropriate. LD1491 allows training of “volunteer staff” to “administer emergency medication”.

I urge you to not support LD1491. It conflicts with current laws, and will dilute the safety balance that is firmly in place under current state law to protect the health and safety of children requiring medication during the school day.

I appreciate your consideration of this testimony.