

Testimony from Adriana Eurich in Support of LD 440
An Act to Continue the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program
Thursday, April 4, 2019

Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

Senator Herbig, Representative Daughtry, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Adriana Eurich, and I am here today to testify in strong support of LD 440, An Act to Continue the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program.

I was born and raised in Maine and grew up in Millinocket, a small rural town in Penobscot County. In 2009, I graduated from Stearns High School in a class of fifty students. I went on to complete my bachelor's degree in Biology at the University of New England, in pursuit of my dream to one day become a physician. I was the first in my immediate family to not only graduate with a four year college degree, but to pursue a career in medicine. As someone who grew up with modest means, I learned very early of the fiscal responsibilities of paying for an education, as I accrued a considerable amount of tuition debt over these four years.

I did not let the cost of education deter me from my hopes and dreams of one day becoming a doctor. In 2015, I was accepted to my top choice medical school, the Tufts University School of Medicine, Maine Track. This is a very unique program in partnership with Maine Medical Center, that provides students who have roots in the state with opportunities to train in Maine. The curriculum includes clinical rotations across the state with exposures to rural and community based training throughout all four years. Many of us, like myself, choose this program because of our devotion to Maine and its healthcare, with the goal of one day practicing here.

In my third year, I completed a nine month rotation in Norway, Maine as a part of the Maine Track's rural longitudinal integrated clerkship. It was here with some of the best internists in the state that I fell in love with rural practice. I chose to pursue a career in Internal Medicine, and just recently matched at Maine Medical Center's Rural Internal Medicine Program, otherwise known as the "RIMM" track. RIMM is notably the first rural medicine training program of its kind in the country. Throughout my three years of residency, I will rotate between Maine Medical Center and Norway, Maine where I will be able to receive well rounded general internal medicine training with a strong primary care focus. In just over a year, the program will be graduating its first resident physician who has already signed a contract to stay and practice in this underserved area. The Maine Track and programs like RIMM are a prime example of how these dedicated institutions are successfully inspiring doctors to stay in Maine.

Medical school, while an incredibly rewarding experience, carries a significant debt burden. The most recent Association of American Medical Colleges data shows that students will graduate

from medical school with a median debt level of over \$200,000. This is even greater for private schools with higher costs of tuition. Maine is one of only six states that does not have its own in-state tuition medical training program, and thus Tufts-MMC falls under this private tuition category. Fortunately, we have devoted programs such as the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship to help provide an affordable medical education for Maine residents.

I stand here today as an incredibly grateful recipient of the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship, which has relieved over 40% of my tuition costs and a significant amount of financial burden. As a result, I have been fortunate to break free of the financial pressure that often persuades many medical students across the country away from primary care in pursuit of higher paying subspecialties, in order to feel capable of repaying their student loan debt. I am pursuing a career in general internal medicine because I am genuinely passionate about the field, without a shadow of a doubt in respect to my ability to repay my student loans. I owe much of this security to the devotion of my home state who has financially invested in my future.

For those reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD440, "An Act to Continue the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program." Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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