



Northern New England Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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The Honorable Susan Deschambault
Chair Standing Committee on Criminal Justice &
Public Safety
100 Saco Falls Way,
Biddeford, ME 04005

The Honorable Charlotte Warren
Chair Standing Committee on Criminal Justice &
Public Safety
19 Oakwood Drive
Hallowell, ME 04347

Re: Support for LD 663 and LD 994

Dear Chair Deschambault and Chair Warren,

On behalf of the Northern New England Society of Addiction Medicine (NNEASAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and other clinicians in Maine who specialize in the prevention and treatment of addiction, I would like to take this opportunity to provide NNEASAM's strong support for LD 663 and LD 994. NNEASAM is dedicated to increasing access to and improving the quality of addiction treatment and evidence-based harm reduction services in the state. To that end, NNEASAM supports LD 663, because it would expand access to addiction treatment for individuals who are incarcerated by establishing a comprehensive addiction treatment program in the state's correctional facilities. NNEASAM also supports LD 994, because it would, among other things, decriminalize possession of hypodermic apparatuses and allow for more robust harm reduction services throughout the state.

LD 663's comprehensive addiction treatment program in correctional facilities would save lives. The program would include screening and assessment for substance use disorders (SUD), the full range of FDA-approved medications for addiction treatment (MAT), counseling, and other services. MAT, when used as part of a comprehensive treatment approach, continues to accrue evidence for its effectiveness in engaging and retaining patients in treatment, reducing withdrawal and craving symptoms, reducing opioid misuse, and reducing other related health and social problems, such as risk of infectious diseases. More specifically, the positive impact of this kind of comprehensive treatment approach for individuals with SUD who are incarcerated cannot be overstated. MAT can help reduce drug overdose deaths and infectious disease transmission both inside jails and prisons and in the community.ⁱ

While LD 663 would strengthen addiction treatment services for individuals who are incarcerated, LD 994 would reduce the risk of people suffering from addiction from being incarcerated in the first place. LD 994 would provide for targeted decriminalization related to hypodermic apparatuses, as well as removal from the definition of drug paraphernalia items used for testing, analyzing, injecting, or otherwise introducing into the human body scheduled drugs. Further, LD 994 would allow a person to possess a residual amount of a scheduled drug that is contained in hypodermic apparatuses without committing the crime of unlawful possession of a scheduled drug. With LD 994's enactment, Maine would be empowering its pharmacies, syringe service programs, and community-based harm reduction organizations to better prevent drug overdoses and the spread of infectious diseases associated with injection drug use, such as HIV and hepatitis C.ⁱⁱ



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In conclusion, NNESAM shares the state of Maine's goal of providing access to high-quality, evidence-based, and comprehensive addiction treatment and harm reduction services to those who are most vulnerable. With the addiction and overdose crisis significantly impacting Maine, NNESAM strongly supports these pieces of legislation and respectfully requests that the committee favorably report them. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Mark Publicker at mpublick@gmail.com, if NNESAM can be of service to you.

Sincerely,

James Berry, MD

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The Honorable Richard A. Pickett

The Honorable Danny Edward Costain

The Honorable Shelly Rudnicki

The Honorable Daniel J. Newman

The Honorable William D. Pluecker

ⁱ 5 Marsden J, Stillwell G, Jones H, et al. Does exposure to opioid substitution treatment in prison reduce the risk of death after release? a national prospective observational study in England. *Addiction*. 2017;112(8):1408-1418.

ⁱⁱ [LEGAL ISSUES AND DRUG PARAPHERNALIA | Proceedings--Workshop on Needle Exchange and Bleach Distribution Programs | The National Academies Press \(nap.edu\)](#)