



128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2018

Legislative Document

No. 1707

H.P. 1187

House of Representatives, December 22, 2017

An Act To Reduce the Cost of Care Resulting from Blood-borne Infectious Diseases

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Received by the Clerk of the House on December 19, 2017. Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative VACHON of Scarborough.
Cosponsored by Senator VOLK of Cumberland and
Representatives: COREY of Windham, HARRINGTON of Sanford, PICCHIOTTI of Fairfield,
Senators: DILL of Penobscot, LANGLEY of Hancock, MAKER of Washington.

1 **Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** according to the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Maine
4 has a reported rate of acute hepatitis C nearly 3 times the average rate found in the United
5 States, a rate largely driven by sharing syringes. Untreated hepatitis C can be fatal; and

6 **Whereas,** the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has flagged
7 several Maine counties as being susceptible to an HIV outbreak akin to the surge in new
8 cases of HIV in Scott County, Indiana, where new cases of HIV increased from an
9 average of 5 per year to 190 in 2015 alone. Analysts determined this crisis was fueled by
10 injection drug use and lack of access to syringe exchange programs and testing services;
11 and

12 **Whereas,** the comparative cost of treating these problems is far more than the cost
13 of preventing these problems; and

14 **Whereas,** while most other states with legal syringe exchange programs publicly
15 fund those programs, Maine does not. Maine's network of 5 syringe exchange programs
16 is lacking in resources, and, in some cases, programs are closing their doors. Also, many
17 residents, especially residents in rural counties, lack access to these programs altogether;
18 and

19 **Whereas,** the longer it takes the Legislature to act on this crisis, the more likely the
20 network of syringe exchange programs will continue to deteriorate; and

21 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
22 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
23 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
24 therefore,

25 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

26 **Sec. 1. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
27 allocations are made.

28 **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF**
29 **Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention 0143**

30 Initiative: Provides funds to support hypodermic apparatus exchange programs pursuant
31 to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 1341, subsection 4.

32

33 GENERAL FUND	2017-18	2018-19
34 All Other	\$75,000	\$75,000
35		
36 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$75,000</u>	<u>\$75,000</u>

1 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this
2 legislation takes effect when approved.

3 **SUMMARY**

4 This bill provides funds to support hypodermic apparatus, or syringe, exchange
5 programs.