

# Maine PRISONER ADVOCACY Coalition



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## **Testimony in support of LD 1159 to the Committee on Health and Human Services February 1, 2022**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Moore, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Peter Lehman and I live in Thomaston. I am a formerly incarcerated citizen and a person in long-term recovery. I am testifying in favor of LD 1159 on behalf of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition whose goal is to promote restorative practices in order to increase public safety and the health of our community.

As members of this committee and knowledgeable policymakers of Maine, you know that punitive responses to drug use don't work.

You have also been leaders in helping to make great strides towards ending the criminalization and stigma of people who use drugs. This is vital to the safety and well-being of Mainers.

Harm Reduction Health Centers are the next step in this process, following the lead of other countries and states including Rhode Island in 2021.

This needs-based model is consistent with best practices recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is an effective way of increasing safety and decreasing injury and death.

We urge you to support LD 1159.