



**Testimony in Favor of  
LD 1159 An Act to Establish a 2 Year Pilot Regarding Harm Reduction Health Centers**

April 10th, 2023

Greetings Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and other honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee of Health and Human Services,

My name is Courtney Gary-Allen. I am the Organizing Director for the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project (ME-RAP). I also have the honor of serving my community as an At-Large City Councilor in Augusta, which makes me one of the municipal officers that would have an opportunity to vote in favor of a harm reduction health center in my community if LD 1159 passes! I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1159 on behalf of our network.

I do not need to tell your committee how many of our friends, neighbors, and community members have died from an accidental overdose last year. Your committee has heard it time and time again. Your committee has considered and approved countless initiatives that seek to save the lives of people who use drugs: treatment facilities, recovery community centers, recovery housing, syringe service programs, and more.

All of these are important tools that we need more of on the front lines of the substance use crisis in Maine.

But none of these things have a 100% effective rate.

As you've heard today, Harm Reduction Health Centers (HRHC) do.

There are currently over 120 of these centers across the world and there has never been a fatal overdose in a Harm Reduction Health Center, ever, in the entire world.

The bottom line is this is about saving lives.

LD 1159 seeks to do this by authorizing the creation of these centers in communities that want them. I think it's very important to understand that nothing in this bill requires any town, city, or community to allow a center to open. Actually quite the contrary, this bill requires that any organization seeking to open a harm reduction health center receive an approval to do so by the local legislative body responsible for that community.



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Futhoremore, while this bill is called a pilot project, it is simply called that because it has a sunset clause, not because it is asking the Maine State Legislature to fund it. Harm reduction and recovery advocates will be following the lead of RI by requesting Opioid Settlement monies, either through the AG's pot of money, the Maine Recovery Council, or at the county or city level. If none of those funding sources are available, we will seek private foundation funding or philanthropy to support these centers.

To put it simply: This legislation costs the State nothing, gives the power to communities to choose if this works for them, and will save lives.

We are just asking you to let us try this. Please pass this legislation, give us two years, let us come back to you and show you the impact it will have.

Just let us save our friends' lives.

Thank you,  
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