

Testimony in Favor of LD 1714

An Act to Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers

Committee on Taxation
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Tommy Hayes
Dixfield, ME 04224

Re: LD 1714

May 5, 2023

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. My name is Tommy Hayes, I am a Dixfield resident. I am an ally for those in recovery. To me this means I do not have to deal with the daily struggles of Substance Use Disorder (SUD). However, I do have physical disabilities and have daily struggles of my own, also my parents have struggled with SUD most of my life. These two things have given me sympathy for those suffering from SUD.

I am here to represent two recovery centers. The Larry Labonte Recovery Center (LLRC) in Rumford and The newly opened Hills Recovery Center in Norway, both of which are located in Oxford County. I work at LLRC as the Naloxone Coordinator and a Recovery Coach. I would like to share my personal journey and the transformative impact it has had on my perception of addiction and the importance of community support.

My involvement with the Larry Labonte Recovery Center began as a temporary position shortly after opening its door in 2020, where I simply aimed to keep the doors open. However, as time went on, I recognized the need for deeper engagement and embarked on Recovery Coaching Training through PRCC and the CCAR Program. This invaluable experience provided me with a profound understanding of how our words and interactions with individuals greatly influence their self-perception and their perception of the community around them.

Furthermore, I was given the opportunity to take Narcan distribution training through Maine Access Points, enabling me to educate the public not only about the importance of Naloxone but also about recognizing the signs of an opioid overdose, understanding the physiological effects of overdose on the body, and familiarizing individuals with the provisions of the Good Samaritan law. Through these efforts, I have been able to empower individuals and equip them with life-saving knowledge.

Through my training, I underwent a significant shift in perspective, and I began to ask myself, "How can I help?" This change in mindset opened doors to compassion and empathy, allowing me to better serve those in need. During the past three years of LLRC's existence, I have witnessed a remarkable shift in the attitudes of our community members. It is heartening to see that they genuinely care. I have observed this transformation through my work with individuals and group Narcan training sessions.

This attitudinal shift is indicative of a growing collective understanding of the importance of supporting individuals struggling with Substance Use Disorder (S.U.D). With sustainable funding for recovery centers, as proposed in LD 1714, we have the potential to make a significant difference not only in the lives of those battling addiction but also in the broader community. By providing resources, treatment, and support, we can foster a healthier and more compassionate society.

In conclusion, I urge this esteemed committee to consider the significance of sustainable funding for recovery community centers like LLRC and The Hills. My personal journey has highlighted the power of empathy, education, and community involvement in combating addiction. By investing in these vital resources, we can create a lasting positive impact on individuals, families, and communities as a whole.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. I am open to answering any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Tommy Hayes