



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Laurie Osher, PhD

13 Mayo Street

Orono, ME 04473

Phone: (207) 944-6743

Laurie.Osher@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Representative Laurie Osher supporting
**LD 1719, An Act to Establish Substance Use Disorder Treatment
Centers**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Laurie Osher and I represent District 25, the majority of Orono. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for **LD 1719, An Act to Establish Substance Use Disorder Treatment Centers**. I am grateful to House Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross for bringing this proposal forward.

LD 1719 addresses a crucial piece of the continuum of care for people with substance use disorder. As members of the committee know, substance use treatment is incredibly difficult to access, because there simply aren't enough spots available in treatment programs and facilities to meet the need. This bill is an important step toward bridging the gap.

I have been proud to work with the recovery advocacy community and many fellow legislators to support harm reduction policies, and just last month, I came before this committee with a proposal to create harm reduction centers. We know that harm reduction policies are critical to keeping our loved ones, friends and neighbors with substance use disorder alive - and we have more work to do, because Mainers are dying every day. In 2022, we lost almost two people a day, on average, to preventable overdoses.

Just as we work to enact these life-saving harm reduction policies, we also need to ensure that every single person who needs a detox bed or a receiving center has a place to go when they are ready to pursue treatment.

I urge you to please support LD 1719. Please feel welcome to contact me with any questions you may have for me.