



c/o ANA-Maine www.anamaine.org P.O. Box 647, Kennebunk, ME 04043

January 17, 2024

In Support: An Act to Implement a Statewide Public Health Response to Substance Use and Amend the Laws Governing Scheduled Drugs

To Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

- Senator Joseph Baldacci, Chair
- Senator Henry Ingwersen
- Representative Michele Meyer – Chair
- Representative Margaret Craven
- Representative Ann Fredericks
- Representative Anne Graham
- Representative Abigail Griffin
- Representative Kathy Javner
- Representative Michael Lemelin
- Representative Colleen Madigan
- Representative Daniel Shagoury
- Representative Sam Zager

From: Juliana L’Heureux, BS., MHSA., RN., ANA-Maine past president and member of the legislative committee.

Thank you Representative Lydia Crafts for submitting this important public health issue for legislative action. My experience as a past director for Maine Association of Mental Health Services, a non-profit organization, provided me with opportunities to hear from people and their families who are impacted by substance use and how this problem negatively impacts on public health, especially among vulnerable young people. As a member of the Rotary Club of Portland, Maine, I have participated in several community educational and training programs to help learn more about how to respond to those who are dealing with substance use crises.

A particularly important provision in the bill is to repeal laws that make “possession of a schedule W, X, Y or Z drug and use 28 of drug paraphernalia a crime”. (cont. page 2)

It also repeals the laws governing the civil violation of use 29 of drug paraphernalia and possession with intent to use drug paraphernalia. Removing the penalties for these violations will provide improved access to those who want to seek treatment but are fearful about being criminalized for having paraphernalia in their possession.

Because this legislation will provide grants to community and provider organizations, I believe the impact will be supported by highly trained professionals and engaged volunteers to expand on the efficient use of the allocated funds. Maine must use all resources we have available to stop the public health crises caused by substance use. Thank you.

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