

Testimony in Support of Funding LD 1714

February 22, 2024

Good Afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and Members of the Appropriations Committee and Members of the Taxation Committee,

My name is Joshua Mitchener, and through this letter, I embody both the resilience of the human spirit and an advocate for those on a journey toward recovery. I am a person who has navigated the treacherous path of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) recovery and am now proud to say I have been in recovery since September 2020. My journey led me to become an active member and volunteer at the Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC), where I also facilitate a SMART Recovery meeting.

The impact of the opioid epidemic on Maine and its citizens cannot be overstated. It is wreaking havoc on lives, families, and communities. Amidst this crisis, recovery community centers like PRCC have emerged as beacons of hope, offering peer recovery services, mutual aid meetings, and invaluable social support. These centers, often operating with scant or non-existent public funding, are pivotal in bridging the gaps within Maine's substance use disorder treatment ecosystem. By serving as primary resources for addiction recovery in many communities, they offer a lifeline to countless individuals.

Please consider the essential role of recovery community centers in our collective fight against substance use disorders by supporting LD 1714. This legislative proposal seeks to secure a sustainable funding model for these centers through the reinvestment of cannabis tax revenue. Such funding would alleviate these centers' constant financial uncertainty, allowing them to focus on expanding and enhancing the critical services they provide to our communities.

Since joining PRCC, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of community and support in recovery. Engaging with a community of like-minded individuals, dedicating my time to help others, and fostering deep, meaningful connections has not only supported my recovery journey but has also underscored the importance of these centers in achieving sustainable long-term recovery. The relationships formed and the sense of purpose gained through volunteering have been instrumental in my recovery process, mirroring the experiences of many others within this supportive community.

The investment in recovery community centers through LD 1714 represents more than just financial support; it symbolizes a commitment to healing, resilience, and the possibility of a brighter future for individuals recovering from substance use disorders. By ensuring the availability of low-barrier resources and support, we can empower more people to join the ranks of those living in long-term recovery.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this critical issue. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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