

Dear Senator Henry Ingwersen, Representative Michele Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

I am writing to express my **strong support** for **LD 514: Resolve, to Raise MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Detoxification Services for Substance Use Disorder Treatment**. This legislation, sponsored by **Senator Baldacci**, is a critical measure to sustain detox beds in Maine and to address our ongoing **substance use disorder (SUD)** crisis—particularly here in **Bangor**.

I am a resident of Bangor and my community has been hit especially hard by the substance use crisis. In **2023 alone**, Bangor police reported **222 confirmed and suspected overdoses, 17 of which were fatal**. This tragic toll underscores the **urgent need** for accessible detoxification services. My city is feeling the profound impact of this crisis on our community and the limitations of our current system in addressing it effectively.

Furthermore, **Bangor serves as a regional hub for healthcare in Northern and Eastern Maine**, making it a critical access point for individuals seeking detox services. However, with **MaineCare** currently reimbursing detox services at **\$403 per day**—far below the nearly **\$700** it costs to operate a detox bed—facilities are at **imminent risk of closure**. **LD 514** proposes raising this rate to **\$594.38 per day**, aligning it with **New Hampshire's rates** and ensuring that detox facilities can remain operational. Without this increase, we risk losing existing detox beds, forcing people to seek treatment out of state or, worse, leaving them with **no options at all**.

You should support this bill because:

Detox is the First Step Toward Recovery.

Most individuals struggling with substance use cannot begin their recovery journey without **medically supervised detox**. Detox provides a **safe and stable environment**, allowing people to transition to further care, such as **rehabilitation or recovery housing**. Without accessible detox services, many in our community are forced to detox **at home, in jail, or in unsafe environments**—significantly increasing the risk of **relapse and overdose**.

We're in a Public Health Emergency.

In **2023, Maine lost over 700 people to overdose—the deadliest year on record**. Families across the state, including in Bangor, call detox centers daily, desperately seeking a bed for their loved ones, only to be turned away due to **funding constraints**. We would not tolerate this level of inaccessibility for conditions like **heart disease or diabetes**—so why are we accepting it for addiction?

Detox Services Decreases Costs and Reduces Overdose Deaths.

Investing in detox services **saves lives and taxpayer dollars**. **Emergency room visits** for opioid-related overdoses cost between **\$4,000 and \$15,000 per visit**, while **long-term hospital stays** can cost **tens of thousands of dollars**—far exceeding the cost of detox treatment. By funding detox adequately, we can **prevent costly emergency interventions** and reduce the strain on our healthcare system.

Supporting Maine's Treatment Infrastructure is Vital to Addressing Our Substance Use Crisis.

Maine must invest in its own treatment infrastructure rather than **sending residents out of state**. **LD 514** would strengthen our local system, ensuring that Mainers can access **life-saving care close to home**. For Bangor, which serves as a **regional healthcare hub**, maintaining adequate detox capacity is **vital** to addressing the substance use crisis effectively. It also reduces the strain on an already stressed healthcare system.

In conclusion, passing LD 514 is not just an investment in treatment—it is an investment in Maine's communities, families, and future. Increasing MaineCare reimbursement rates for detox services will keep detox beds open, expand treatment access, and ultimately **save lives**.

I strongly **urge the committee** to act swiftly in support of **LD 514**. Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to addressing **Maine's substance use disorder crisis**.

Sincerely,

Michael Beck
Bangor