



**Testimony in Support of LD 514:
Resolve, to Raise MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Detoxification Services for Substance Use Disorder
Treatment**

March 10, 2025

My name is Tess Parks. I am the Policy Director of the Maine Recovery Action Project (ME-RAP), a grassroots network of Mainers working on community and public policy based solutions to substance use. I am here today to testify in favor of LD 514 on behalf of our statewide team of organizers.

For years, our organization has been on the front lines of advocacy efforts to expand the number of detox beds in Maine. After years of tireless calls for increased access, there are now more detox beds available for Mainers seeking recovery from substance use disorder (SUD). However, the reality is that many providers today are unable to cover the operating costs of providing detox services with current MaineCare reimbursement rates. Inadequate funding forces providers to operate MaineCare beds at a loss.

Ensuring access to detox services is not only the right thing to do, but it is the fiscally responsible approach. According to a 2022 report from the University of Maine's Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, the lost productivity attributed to the opioid epidemic in Maine in 2019 was \$271 million annually from morbidity and \$565 million in mortality¹. This same report cited a study that estimated the total economic impact of the opioid epidemic in Maine to be \$6.8 billion in 2017, which was largely attributable to reduced quality of life from opioid use disorder, the value of life lost to overdose deaths, and lost productivity. Furthermore, detox services are more cost-effective than long-term hospital stays, emergency room visits, and criminal justice involvement.

Beyond any monetary cost, our communities have been impacted the most by the loss of our loved ones. Many of our community members gathered this past weekend in Bangor for Black Balloon Day to honor the 490 Mainers that passed away in 2024 from an overdose. By adequately funding detox services, Maine ensures that the door to recovery is always open whenever someone decides they are ready for help.

We urge this committee to unanimously support LD 514.

I thank you for your time and am willing to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Tess Parks
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¹ Daley, Angela, Prianka M. Sarker, Liam Sigaud, Marcella H. Sorg, and Jamie A. Wren. "Drug-Related Morbidity and Mortality in Maine: Lost Productivity from 2015 to 2020." *Maine Policy Review* 31.1 (2022) : 8 -18, <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol31/iss1/1>.