



March 13, 2025

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Good morning, Chair Ingwersen and Chair Meyer, and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Annika Moore, and I am the Advocacy Team Leader at Preble Street. Preble Street's mission is to empower people experiencing problems with homelessness, housing, hunger, and poverty and to advocate for solutions to these issues.

Preble Street strongly supports LD 710, An Act to Expand Access and Reduce Barriers to Access to Naloxone Hydrochloride and Other Opioid Overdose-Reversing Medications. This bill focuses on expanding access to opioid overdose-reversing medications, reducing barriers to Narcan distribution, and providing legal protection for individuals and organizations that respond to opioid-related overdoses.

Studies show that Narcan and other opioid-reversing medications are critical, especially when it comes to harm reduction. Preble Street's Health Services program conducted a study that was funded through the Maine Health Access Foundation to gather insight from people who use drugs on needs and services to reduce fatal and non-fatal overdose. This grant specifically hired people with lived experience and peers to develop a survey alongside Preble Street Health Services staff. Of 102 survey respondents, 21 were housed independently, 15 were in permanent supportive housing, 38 were in a shelter, and 28 were unsheltered.

43% of survey respondents reported not having easy access to Narcan outside Monday – Friday business hours. However, when stratifying data, not including those in 24/7 shelters or permanent supportive housing programs and only accounting for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness or in independent living, that number increased to 60% of people reporting not having easy access to Narcan outside Monday – Friday business hours. Contrasting these barriers to the potential of 24/7 Narcan locations, 96% of survey respondents said 24/7 Narcan locations would help them access Narcan. In open-ended questions, answers relating to increased Narcan access were the second most common response. In discussions with people with lived experience participating in the grant and survey respondents, vending machines were a commonly suggested intervention in achieving 24/7 Narcan access, which is part of the proposed legislation.

Due to these community findings, Preble Street urges you to pass LD710 because it will increase accessibility to life-saving medication, allow community-based organizations to distribute Naloxone without being subject

50 years of turning hunger and homelessness into opportunity and hope

to specific regulations, and allow municipalities to provide these products in public areas, such as restrooms, buildings, libraries, parks, and vending machines.

We want to thank Representative Dr. Sam Zager for sponsoring this public health legislation. As you can see, this legislation is informed by people with lived experience and will deliver solutions to expanding access to opioid overdose-reversing medications and reducing barriers to Narcan distribution. This bill illustrates Preble Street's mission of empowering people with lived experience to identify solutions that directly affect their lives.

Thank you.

