



Maine Chiefs of Police Association

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Statement in support of

L.D. 219, An Act to Limit Hypodermic Apparatus Exchange Programs to a One-for-one Exchange

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

March 17, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Jason Moen. I am the Chief of the Auburn Police Department, and the President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in support of 219.

The mission of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association is to secure a closer official and personal relationship among Maine Police Officials; to secure a unity of action in law enforcement matters; to enhance the standards of police personnel, police training and police professionalism generally; to devise ways and means for equality of law enforcement throughout the state of Maine; to advance the prevention and detection of crime; to prescribe to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics; and to promote the profession of law enforcement as an integral and dedicated force in today's society sworn to the protection of life and property.

This bill requires the number of hypodermic apparatuses that may be exchanged in a hypodermic apparatus exchange program certified by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention must be limited to one per participant for each one exchanged by that participant. Under current law, the Maine CDC may limit the number of hypodermic apparatuses provided by the certified hypodermic apparatus exchange programs to participants. Instead of a one-for-one exchange, a person may receive multiple clean needles for every used needle turned into a participating program.

As law enforcement officers, it is our duty to protect the health and safety of our community. Drug use prevention and treatment programs are essential tools in carrying out that mission. Just as critical to keeping the public safe is supporting policies that limit unintended consequences of certain drug use methods.

The discovery of discarded syringes, many connected with illicit drug use, can occur almost anywhere. Whether it is a city park, local beach, school playground, or out in the woods, Maine faces a significant litter problem with used needles. In parts of the state where drug use occurs more frequently, it is common to see multiple used needles scattered in areas that are accessed often by the public. It is one of the biggest complaints we hear from residents within our law enforcement jurisdictions.

Discarded syringes pose a real threat to the public due to concerns of infection, disease transmission, or injury to an individual who may come in contact with the apparatus. Law enforcement officers also are not immune to health hazards imposed by used needles.

One-for-one needle exchange programs, as proposed in LD 219, still provide an effective harm reduction initiative by allowing users to exchange used needles for new, sterile ones. But limiting the number of needles that may be exchanged to one at a time will help keep our neighborhoods and public safety officials safe from discarded needles.

For these reasons, the Maine Chiefs of Police Association supports the passage of LD 219. We respectfully ask members of the Committee to vote in favor of the legislation.