



LD 710 – An Act to Expand Access and Reduce Barriers to Access to Naloxone Hydrochloride and Other Opioid Overdose-reversing Medications

Testimony in Support March 17, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name Matt Marston and I am the Chief Pharmacy Officer for Northern Light Health. I am here today providing testimony speaking in support of this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with more than 10,000 employees statewide.

Expanding access to naloxone hydrochloride to the community is a goal that Northern Light Health has supported since Title 22, §2353 went into effect. We have expanded access through our primary care clinics, community outreach programs, hospital ED and acute care settings, as well as through our outpatient retail pharmacy locations providing over one thousand kits at no cost to our patients each year. Despite these efforts and the flexibilities that were provided by this statute, barriers remain.

Healthcare providers are held to numerous standards above and beyond those of public health and community programs that restrict the ways in which we can provide medications. CMS Conditions of Participation, Joint Commission standards, and Board of Pharmacy Regulations all dictate the methods in which pharmacies and other healthcare providers must handle the dispensation of drug products. In consultation with the Joint Commission and Northern Light Health legal counsel, we are proposing additional amendments to the existing legislation to extend immunity protections to healthcare workers for administering over the counter (OTC) naloxone in the event of an overdose as well as to specifically identify OTC naloxone as the more common product presentation today that should not be subject to the same rigorous standards as prescription only products as called for by CMS and the Joint Commission. It is our hope that through these changes we can further expand upon what we have built for access at Northern Light Health as well as the medical community at large.

Northern Light Health would be happy to work with the committee to address any follow-up questions or concerns related to this bill.

Sincerely,

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Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Northern Light Laboratory
Northern Light Pharmacy
Sebasticook Valley Hospital

Suggested Amendments:

2. Prescription; possession; administration. The prescription, **dispensing,** possession and administration of naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid overdose-reversing medication is governed by this subsection.

A. A health care professional may directly or by standing order prescribe naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid overdose-reversing medication to an individual at risk of experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose. **Over the counter naloxone hydrochloride may be provided or administered with or without a prescription.** [PL 2023, c. 161, §3 (AMD).]

A-1. A pharmacist may prescribe and dispense naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid overdose-reversing medication in accordance with protocols established under Title 32, section 13815 to an individual of any age at risk of experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose. **Over the counter naloxone hydrochloride may be provided or administered with or without a prescription.** [PL 2023, c. 161, §3 (AMD).]

C. A health care professional may directly or by standing order prescribe naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid overdose-reversing medication to a member of an individual's immediate family or a friend of the individual or to another person in a position to assist the individual if the individual is at risk of experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose. **Over the counter naloxone hydrochloride may be provided or administered with or without a prescription.** [PL 2023, c. 161, §3 (AMD).]

C-1. A pharmacist may prescribe and dispense naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid overdose-reversing medication in accordance with protocols established under Title 32, section 13815 to a person of any age who is a member of an individual's immediate family or a friend of the individual or to another person in a position to assist the individual if the individual is at risk of experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose. **Over the counter naloxone hydrochloride may be provided or administered with or without a prescription.** [PL 2023, c. 161, §3 (AMD).]