

## Testimony of Community Organizations, Providers and Community Members

LD 1687 – Ought to Pass

Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

April 29, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services: we, the undersigned, are community organizations, public health advocates, constituents, and individuals that are, work with, care for, love, and/or support Mainers living with or at elevated risk to contract HIV. We write to express our strong support for LD 1687, *An Act to Clarify and Increase Access to HIV Prevention Medications*. This bill builds on its previous version by addressing reimbursement for pharmacies and medication coverage that expands access to HIV prevention at pharmacies.

In 2021, Maine helped lead a nationwide effort as just the third state in the country to pass legislation that enabled people to access HIV pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis directly from a pharmacist. With protocols now officially adopted by the Maine Board of Pharmacy, we must address key provisions in the statute to ensure effective implementation:

- **Reimbursement** – LD 1687 ensures pharmacists are recognized as providers and reimbursed at a rate comparable to physicians for equivalent services required by Maine Board of Pharmacy protocols. This model is consistent with other states passing similar legislation.
- **Medication Coverage** – scientific advancements of HIV medications are emerging rapidly. Long-acting injectable medications are a game changer in the ability to stop HIV transmission and a medication that protects from infection with just one injection over a 6-month period is on the cusp of entering the market. LD 1687 ensures coverage for these medications of longer duration so people can access the strongest prevention methods available.

This policy is not just smart public health—it's urgently needed. At the same time that we face rising HIV cases amidst an active HIV outbreak in Bangor, federal funding for HIV prevention is under threat. Programs funded through HRSA, HUD, and the CDC are facing proposed cuts that would have catastrophic impacts on our state's ability to prevent new infections. In this environment, we must act boldly at the state level to preserve access to proven, cost-effective prevention strategies. Every HIV infection prevented saves over \$500,000 in lifetime medical costs.<sup>1</sup>

We know that PrEP and PEP work. We know they save lives. We know they are key to ending the HIV epidemic. But they only work if people can get them. This bill ensures they can.

We urge you to support LD 1687 and help expand access to HIV prevention across our state. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Signed, [cont.]

1. Bingham A, Shrestha RK, Khurana N, Jacobson EU, Farnham PG. Estimated Lifetime HIV-Related Medical Costs in the United States. *Sex Transm Dis*. 2021 Apr 1;48(4):299-304. doi: 10.1097/OLQ.0000000000001366. PMID: 33492100.

American Pharmacists Association  
Equality Community Center  
EqualityMaine  
Frannie Peabody Center  
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders  
Greater Portland Health  
HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute  
Mabel Wadsworth Center  
Maine Access Immigrant Network  
Maine Access Points  
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Maine HIV Advisory Committee  
Maine Medical Association  
Maine Osteopathic Association  
Maine Pharmacy Association  
Maine Public Health Association  
Maine Society of Health System Pharmacies  
MaineTransNet  
Planned Parenthood of Northern New England  
PrEP4All  
The Purple Iris Foundation  
The Rx EACH Initiative  
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