

May 4, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, my name is John Hennessy. I am honored to serve as President of the EqualityMaine Board of Directors. For 40 years, EqualityMaine has advocated for Maine's diverse LGBTQ+ community.

In 2021, the legislature and the Governor supported allowing people to access PrEP and PEP directly from a pharmacist. LD 1687 expands on this law to ensure that insurance covers pharmacists' services and medication options, supporting the effective implementation of the 2021 law. We urge you to support this bill.

HIV prevention cannot be delayed. Maine is currently responding to an HIV outbreak in Bangor. Critical HIV prevention programs are being eliminated at the federal level. We need as many tools as possible to reduce barriers and increase access to prevention and care. LD 1687 does this by broadening HIV prevention medication coverage and building capacity at pharmacies by compensating for their services. Broad medication coverage ensures people have access to the best tools for them.

Long-acting injectables can be important for people who may not be able to safely store pill bottles or have difficulty with daily medication adherence.

Every HIV infection prevented saves over \$500,000 in lifetime healthcare costs.

This bill clarifies, with respect to insurance coverage for HIV prevention medication, that each long-acting injectable drug with a different duration constitutes a separate method of administration. The bill clarifies that pharmacists are allowed to dispense HIV preventive oral medication under current law, allows pharmacists to dispense injectable medication of any duration in certain circumstances and requires insurance carriers to treat pharmacists dispensing HIV drugs in a manner equivalent to how the insurance carriers treat physicians and allow pharmacists to bill the carriers and receive payment directly. The bill also provides reimbursement under the MaineCare program to pharmacists for prescribing, dispensing, and administering HIV prevention drugs.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has now been raging in the United States for more than 40 years. We have lost far too many people way too soon, and far too many new cases are still diagnosed each year. Because it is 99% effective at preventing new infections, PrEP is the kind of game-changer that can help us end this crisis. Please support this bill.