



Testimony in Support of LD 1847 and LD 104

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Renee Page, Executive Director at Healthy Communities of the Capital Area (HCCA), a public health primary prevention organization in Hallowell. I am testifying in favor of LD 1847 and LD 104, which will require testing and tracking in Maine's Medical Cannabis Program and prioritize efforts to reduce youth cannabis use.

Maine's Medical Cannabis Program lags far behind the national standard on safety and transparency. Out of more than 30 of states with medical cannabis programs, Maine is the only one that does not require testing for contaminants like heavy metals, pesticides, or mold. According to the 2023 Maine Office of Cannabis Policy's report Harmful Contaminants in Maine's Medical Cannabis Program, 42% of medical cannabis tested had at least one contaminant that would have failed testing in the Adult Use Cannabis Program. This lack of oversight is unfair to the thousands of people who use medical cannabis, including pediatric patients. They deserve to have confidence that the products they're using to manage medical conditions are free from contaminants that could harm their health.

Nearly 1 in 5 Maine high schoolers currently use cannabis. That's especially concerning given that today's cannabis products can contain levels of THC as high as 90%, compared to the two to three percent THC concentrations typical of cannabis in the 1970s. Higher potency cannabis can alter adolescent brain development, and increase their risk of anxiety, depression, and other mental illnesses like schizophrenia (US CDC 2024). Indeed, pediatricians and psychiatrists in Maine and across the country warn that they're seeing an increase in people experiencing mental illness that may be associated with cannabis use. (The New York Times, *As America's Marijuana Use Grows, So Do the Harms*). Yet more than 60% of Maine high schoolers believe there is little to no risk of using cannabis once or twice a week (2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey Data). We need policies that prioritize reducing high-risk youth cannabis use so that our kids can thrive. LD 1847 will help reduce high-risk youth cannabis use by:

- Establishing a maximum potency of THC in edible products in the Medical Cannabis Program similar to what's already in place in the Adult Use Program.
- Forming a study group to examine youth cannabis use and evidence-based ways to prevent and reduce high-risk use.
- Diverting a portion of the current Adult Use cannabis taxes toward public health and safety awareness and education.
- Requiring that edible gummies sold in the Adult Use Program that aren't stamped or embossed with the Universal Symbol be sold in blister packaging to reduce the risk of accidental ingestion.

I respectfully request you to vote LD 1847 and LD 104 "Ought to Pass" to help ensure transparency and safety in Maine's Medical Cannabis Program. It's long overdue. Thank you.

Renee Page, MPH, PS-C, CLC
Executive Director, Healthy Communities of the Capital Area

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LD 1847

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