

Testimony in Support of LD 484, An Act Regarding the Department of Public Safety

Authorization to Procure, Possess, and Furnish Controlled Substances

Rick Petrie, EMT-P

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Rick Petrie, and I serve as a Paramedic with North East Mobile Health Services, providing emergency medical care across rural Maine, including some of the most remote and resource-limited communities in our state. I am here today to testify in strong support of LD 484, legislation brought forward in direct response to the federal **Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act** and evolving rules from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

As a practicing paramedic, I can tell you plainly: timely access to emergency medications is not theoretical—it is the difference between life and death. In rural regions like northern Maine, EMS clinicians often operate far from hospitals, sometimes with extended transport times and limited backup. Under current and evolving federal regulatory frameworks, EMS agencies are facing increasing complexity in how controlled medications are stored, tracked, and administered in the field. While these rules are well-intentioned, without appropriate state-level alignment and support, they risk creating barriers to patient care.

LD 484 is a necessary and pragmatic response. It ensures that Maine's EMS system can remain compliant with federal law while preserving our ability to deliver critical, time-sensitive interventions. Medications such as analgesics, sedatives, and life-saving emergency drugs must be immediately available to paramedics in the field. Any delay caused by regulatory ambiguity or logistical hurdles directly impacts patient outcomes—whether that's a trauma patient in severe pain, a cardiac patient requiring rapid intervention, or a critically ill individual needing airway management.

From an operational standpoint, EMS agencies are already working diligently to maintain strict accountability, security, and documentation for controlled substances. LD 484 supports these efforts by providing clear statutory authority and alignment with federal expectations under PPAEMA. It helps eliminate uncertainty for EMS services, medical directors, and regulators, ensuring that we can continue to operate safely, legally, and effectively.

Equally important, this bill protects the sustainability of rural EMS. Agencies like ours are already facing workforce shortages, financial constraints, and increasing call volumes. Adding regulatory barriers without clear guidance or enabling legislation only compounds these challenges. LD 484 reduces administrative burden while maintaining appropriate safeguards, allowing EMS professionals to focus on what matters most—patient care.

In closing, I urge the Committee to support LD 484. This bill is about maintaining access to emergency care, supporting frontline providers, and ensuring that Maine's EMS system remains strong, compliant, and responsive to the needs of our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Petrie, EMT-P

North East Mobile Health Services