



To: The Honorable Senator Rafferty, Chair
The Honorable Representative Brennan, Chair
Members, Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Mikenzie Dwyer, Intern with Maine Medical Association and University of New England Senior

Date: 20 April 2021

Re: **In Support**
LD 772 An Act To Permit Naloxone Possession, Prescription, Administration and Distribution in Public and Private Schools

The Maine Medical Association is the State's largest professional physician organization representing more than 4,300 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine and promote the health of all Maine residents.

I am pleased to be before you here today to offer our **Support** for LD 772, An Act To Permit Naloxone Possession, Prescription, Administration and Distribution in Public and Private Schools. Opioid overdose deaths are a public health crisis according to the National Institute of Health¹. It is the leading cause of injury-related deaths in the United States according to the CDC² and the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Survey on Drug Use and Health, there were 2.2 million adolescents (ages 12-17) who were current illicit drug users in

¹ National Institute of Health (NIH): National Institute of Drug Abuse. (2019). Opioid. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). *Drug overdose deaths*. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>

2017. In 2019 there were a total of 4,777 overdose deaths of youth: 3,391 of those were opioid related³.

In June of 2015, the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) adopted a position document supporting the use of naloxone in schools where they stated: “Community prevention education is key when addressing the public health crisis of opioid-related deaths. School nurses have a crucial role to play with research-based, primary prevention strategies within their school communities” (NASN, 2015).

Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that temporarily reverses the potentially deadly respiratory depressive effects for legal and illicit drugs. When administered quickly and effectively, it has the potential to immediately restore breathing to a person experiencing an opioid overdose⁴. School-nurses are oftentimes the first responders in schools. When emergencies happen, such as an opioid overdose, a quick response is vital to a positive outcome. The safe and effective management of opioid pain reliever (OPR)-related overdose in schools should be incorporated into every school’s emergency preparedness and response plan. It has the potential to save a child’s life. Furthermore, it could open up a conversation in the community about opioid use among our youth and further our efforts to stopping this epidemic.

Thank you for your time today. I am happy to answer any questions and we are happy to provide any materials you think useful for the work session.

³ NIDA. 2021, March 15. Drug Overdoses in Youth. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/drug-overdoses-youth> on 2021, April 19

⁴ Johnson, K., Selekman, J. (2019). Students engaging in high risk behavior. In J. Selekman (Ed.) *School nursing: A comprehensive text* (3rd ed.), pp. 826-835. Philadelphia, PA: F.A. Davis Company.

Sincerely,

Mikenzie Dwyer