



**IN FAVOR of LD1159:**

**An Act to Establish a 2-Year Pilot Program Regarding Harm Reduction Health Centers**

Greetings: Representative Osher and the Honorable Health and Human Services Committee. I am Jeanne Marquis, a parent of a person in recovery, Selectman for China, Maine; and an organizer for Maine Recovery Advocacy Project. I am testifying in favor of establishing Harm Reduction Health Centers in Maine.

When you have a family member with substance-use disorder, you can't wish their addiction away. Your loved one needs to choose the path to recovery on their own. Until they make this choice, we need to keep them alive. Harm Reduction Health Centers will keep our sons and daughters alive.

Harm Reduction is not a new concept to Maine. Since 1998, this state has allowed Syringe Service Programs because we know that clean needles reduce the risk of bloodborne infections such as HIV and hepatitis.

Harm Reduction Health Centers are Maine's next step in evidence-based initiatives addressing substance use. These centers will be run by experienced harm reduction specialists and nursing staff who will support clients who have consumed substances on-site by monitoring and providing emergency medical care if necessary. All of the centers will also provide support by recovery specialists so when people make the choice to choose recovery, they will have the help they need.

As an elected official, I am pleased to see there is a clause in the bill that municipalities have the opportunity to decide if a center is right for their community. It would be a choice of the residents.

To the critics who think Harm Reduction Health Centers will enable more drug use, I say absolutely not. What these centers will do is enable people to not have to use alone, enable people access to related health services, enable people to have access to recovery services, and, most importantly, enable people to live.

So I urge you to vote in favor of LD1159. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jeanne Marquis  
China, Maine