



*Riverbird*  
*psychedelic therapy clinic*

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GOOD MEDICINE COLLECTIVE

May 14, 2023  
Maine Department of Veterans and Legal Affairs

Re: LD 1914 - An Act To Enact the Maine Psilocybin Health Access Act  
Position: In Favor

Dear members of the Veterans & Legal Affairs Committee,  
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Riverbird Clinic and the Good Medicine Collective in regards to Bill LD 1914. These two organizations have been offering legal psychedelic assisted therapy in Portland since 2019. We provide mental health services to people in Maine with conditions such as refractory depression, post-traumatic stress and others that have been particularly difficult for conventional medicine to treat.

Before co-founding the Riverbird Clinic, I worked at the Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough and was acutely aware of how devastating post traumatic stress and opioid use disorder was for those who served our country. The pain of one younger veteran in particular has been with me as I worked with other compassionate healthcare providers to offer legal psychedelic therapy in Maine. We've made notable progress, but at this time our clinic can only offer the pharmaceutical drug Ketamine for its therapeutic services, which has a variety of limitations.

We need more proven psychedelic therapy options to be legally available within Maine as we become increasingly aware of more Mainers who are using psilocybin mushrooms in underground settings to address particularly challenging conditions such as severe post-traumatic stress. These people who are seeking healing are afraid to openly discuss their illegal use of psilocybin because they fear prosecution. This fear propagates riskier use and even more concerning, it can further traumatization.

As evidence continues to emerge from multiple high quality clinical research and epidemiological studies, it's becoming more clear that the medical risks of psilocybin are minimal compared to the social risks for people who are working with these medicines within a legal system that penalizes their use. This emerging evidence also shows that the original reasons why these mushrooms were made illegal were erroneously based. Mushrooms are not addictive, don't cause psychosis and have a clear health benefit when used in settings that's aren't operating in the shadows of fear.

Finally, a large study of the general population within the US showed that people who used opioids and psychedelic mushrooms are less likely to develop opioid use disorder when compared to those who have only used opiates. Through my efforts to support the

screening, prevention and treatment of opioid use disorder in Maine's Federally Qualified Health Centers, I am particularly interested in how this bill opens an additional way for those who struggle with opioid use disorder to address the traumas that underlie the sources of their addictions and chronic pain.

Our veterans, families and other loved ones who are struggling with conditions such as opioid use disorder, depression or post-traumatic stress shouldn't also incur the additional burden of being incarcerated for their use of psilocybin mushrooms for recovery and health. Given the mental health crisis that we're in as well as the increasing fatalities due to opioid overdoses, we have a responsibility to Mainers to move ahead and establish a legal and safe pathway for those who are suffering.

I fully support this bill and sincerely hope that your caucus feels the same.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Selma Holden'.

-Selma Holden, MD MPH MS