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Testimony of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
Department of Health and Human Services

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

In support of LD 2050, *An Act to Expand Accreditation Options for Laboratories That Conduct Blood-alcohol or Drug Testing*

Hearing Date: January 9, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Lauren Niskach, and I serve as the Forensic Laboratory Director within the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory within the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC). I am here today to testify in support of LD 2050, *An Act to Expand Accreditation Options for Laboratories That Conduct Blood-alcohol or Drug Testing*.

The intent of this bill, proposed by the Department, is to provide additional subcontracting options for Maine's law enforcement agencies should the Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) be unable to provide toxicology testing. Under current law, a laboratory licensed by Maine's DHHS or any other state and certified under the federal Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) of 1988 may test blood samples to determine blood-alcohol level or the presence of a drug or drug metabolite. This bill expands options to include laboratories that are accredited to ISO 17025 for testing, should HETL be unable to perform testing. The ISO 17025 standard is the most common accreditation standard for Forensic Laboratories and the quality of testing performed by an ISO 17025 accredited laboratory would best match that performed by HETL. Utilizing a laboratory accredited to the ISO 17025 standard would also ensure appropriate chain of custody procedures were followed for evidence items. Finally, expanding options provides potential cost savings to law enforcement agencies who can choose among more options, potentially with lower fees.

Maine CDC supports LD 2050 and respectfully requests this bill be passed to provide flexibility and more options for blood-alcohol testing or the presence of a drug or drug metabolite.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have and to make myself available for questions at the work session.