



**Maine Medical  
Association**



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

**AND**

**THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION**

**IN SUPPORT OF**

**L.D. 1975, An Act to Implement a Statewide Public Health Response to Substance Use and Amend the Laws Governing Scheduled Drugs**

**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Room 209, Cross Building, Augusta, Maine  
Wednesday, January 17, 2024**

**Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Anne Sedlack, and I am the Director of Advocacy for the Maine Medical Association. I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 1975, An Act to Implement a Statewide Public Health Response to Substance Use and Amend the Laws Governing Scheduled Drugs on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and the Maine Osteopathic Association.**

**The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.**

**This year MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined together to advocate from one voice. And our Committee has determined that it is important to testify in support of LD 1975.**

First, MMA and MOA are committed partners in this work. MMA recently launched the 1,000 Lives Campaign, a systematic, clinician-led, collaborative campaign to reduce the number of predicted opioid-related deaths in Maine by 1,000 from current projections, because

the number of drug overdose deaths in Maine has continued to rise significantly during the past 10 years, despite the tremendous collective efforts to reduce deaths through multiple interventions from clinicians, first responders, the recovery community, Maine state government, and many others. Given the presence of highly lethal drugs such as fentanyl, Maine needs its healthcare organizations and clinicians, in partnership with the State, counties, and municipalities, to assume a leadership role in this effort and enhance their care of Mainers in response to this daunting public health crisis.

We are in a public health crisis. We have to be proactive to solve the problem in order to save lives.

Second, we believe that the Substance Use, Health and Safety Fund created by the legislation to increase voluntary access to community care for persons who need services related to substance use is important. We know that the Legislature is constantly receiving funding requests and that it is important to balance the needs of the community with fiscal responsibility. But saving our community members' lives should always tip that balance in favor of funding the initiative.

Finally, 17,000 Mainers are actively seeking treatment for substance use disorders, yet they are unable to access it; this is a problem. We know that the health care system is at capacity and there are a lot of great bills this Session to help alleviate that. We think establishment of more centers to conduct health needs assessments, offer screenings for substance use disorder treatment, provide essential support for basic needs, and act as a vital link to treatment, harm reduction, and recovery services is critical. We need to make it easier for Mainers to get help.

Thank you for considering the support of Maine's physician community about L.D. 1975. We cannot pass up the opportunity to fund initiatives like this to address this public health crisis. We urge an "ought to pass" vote on this bill. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Thank you,

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