



American
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Testimony of Whitney A Parrish Perry

American Heart Association

In Support of LD 166

*An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Tobacco Products in Pharmacies and Retail Establishments
Containing Pharmacies*

May 13, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Whitney Parrish Perry, and I am the Government Relations Director of the American Heart Association (AHA)—the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke, whose mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. The AHA is supporting LD 166, "*An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Tobacco Products in Pharmacies and Retail Establishments Containing Pharmacies*," and extends its gratitude to Representative Moonen for continuing his work to ensure the health and safety of all Mainers.

Tobacco use remains the nation's number one cause of preventable death. Use of tobacco products is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths nationwide. In Maine, the adult smoking rate is 14%, compared to 12.1% across the United States.¹ Additionally, our state has the unfortunate distinction of having the highest smoking rate in the Northeast.² Currently in Maine, **there is a contradiction** between profiting from tobacco sale—the leading cause of preventable death in the United States—in the same setting where health care is provided: a pharmacy. In fact, the United States is the **only place in the world where tobacco products are sold in pharmacies**.

Community pharmacists are one of our most trusted health care professionals and a critical part of any health care team. Pharmacies, like hospitals and clinics, are an essential part of our health care delivery system. As such, tobacco products should not be available to purchase from pharmacies. **LD 166 would close this loophole and prohibit the sale of tobacco products within this health care facility.**



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Additionally, we believe it is a potential ethical and financial conflict for pharmacies, who are providers of health care, to profit from the sale of harmful products known to cause heart and pulmonary diseases and cancer. LD 166 would ensure that all health care professionals and institutions promote individual and public health by not selling tobacco products.

It is important to send a clear message that health care facilities do not promote tobacco use, and prohibiting the sale of tobacco by a pharmacy is an important step to achieve this goal. Smokers trying to quit can go into a pharmacy knowing they will not have to see tobacco products sold next to cessation treatments designed to help their efforts to quit.

Tobacco-Free Pharmacy laws have been spreading around the country. CVS ended the sale of tobacco products years ago, along with many independent pharmacies in Maine. In July of 2020, Hannaford announced it would phase out sales of tobacco products in all its stores in the Northeastⁱⁱⁱ and in March of 2022, Walmart announced it would stop selling tobacco products in some of its stores across the nation.^{iv}

We respectfully urge you to vote *Ought to Pass* on LD 166. We appreciate your time and consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Whitney A Parrish Perry
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American Heart Association

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ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2025. URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2020/07/15/business/hannaford-to-stop-selling-tobacco-products-in-all-stores-in-the-northeast/>

^{iv} <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/28/business/walmart-cigarettes-sales-retail/index.html>