



Maine Medical
Association



Maine Association
of Psychiatric Physicians



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION,
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION, AND THE MAINE ASSOCIATION OF
PSYCHIATRIC PHYSICIANS**

Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
Room 436, State House, Augusta, Maine
Monday, May 5, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. My name is Patty Hymanson. I live in York, am a physician, and was a past-Maine State Representative from 2015-2022. I am submitting this testimony for the Monday, May 5, 2025, hearings on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing over 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 to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State. The Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians (MAPP) works toward a future in which there is no mental illness, because high quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment is available to all individuals and their families, and psychiatrists are connected and supported professionally. They do this by advancing the treatment, rehabilitation, and care of persons with mental disorders; advocating for the professional interests of psychiatrists; providing educational opportunities for clinicians, patients, and the public; and building a strong and supportive community among our members.

Our positions on the bills are as follows:

- Neither For Nor Against
 - LD 1488 - An Act Regarding Cannabis Testing and the Manufacture of Cannabis and Hemp Products

- LD 1567 - An Act to Require Labeling of Radiation Treatment and Ozonation of Adult Use Cannabis and Inspection and Registration of Associated Equipment
- In Support
 - LD 104 - An Act to Protect the Health of Medical Cannabis Patients and Streamline the Mandatory Testing of Cannabis
 - LD 1847 - An Act to Institute Testing and Tracking of Medical Use Cannabis and Cannabis Products Similar to Adult Use Cannabis and Cannabis Products, Dedicate a Portion of the Adult Use Cannabis Sales and Excise Tax to Medical Use Cannabis Programs and Create a Study Group
- Against
 - LD 1620 - An Act to Amend the Laws Regulating the Testing of Adult Use Cannabis and Adult Use Cannabis Products
 - LD 1672 - An Act to Allow Participation in the Adult Use Cannabis Tracking System to Be Voluntary
 - LD 1840 - An Act to Amend the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act
 - LD 1820 - An Act to Simplify Regulation of the Adult Use Cannabis Industry
 - LD 1897 - An Act Regarding Sun-grown Cultivation in the Medical Use and Adult Use Cannabis Industries

As for the category of neither for nor against, given the limited notice of which bills would be set for a public hearing this week, our legislative committees have not had a chance to review the positive or negative impacts of these bills. We are looking forward to hearing the discussion at the public hearing and will offer additional testimony if we feel the physician community's voice is necessary.

As for the support category, as a former legislator and chair of the committee that handled these matters, I know the intention was always to have medical cannabis be tested, tracked, and have potency limits. I appreciate Representative Malon and Representative Graham for recognizing that patient safety has been compromised for far too long and for giving this Committee the opportunity to ensure that patient safety is no longer at risk.

Maine is the only state in the country that does not have some form of testing for the medical program. That alone should cause this Committee to act, but I am here today to give more reasons from my perspective as a physician.. What harm do patients who use medical cannabis as medicine put themselves in?

Arsenic has been linked to cancer of the bladder, lungs, skin, kidney, nasal passages, liver and prostate. Maine's bedrock leeches high levels of arsenic into our water.¹ Cannabis is much better than most plants at pulling arsenic from the ground into the plant. Maine-grown cannabis is at special risk because of the high arsenic in the water.²

¹ Maineenvironmentallaboratory.com

² cannabis.net/blog/news/the-dangers-of-heavy-metals-in-your-cannabis;iris.epa.gov/static/pdfs/0278tr.pdf.

Aspergillus is a toxic fungus that gets into the lungs from inhaled cannabis. Aspergillus can grow in the lungs and sinuses.³ It has caused death, especially in people whose immune systems are weak. People with cancer have weakened immune systems, and they might use cannabis to control their appetites and nausea, which puts them at risk for harmful or deadly aspergillosis, for example. (medicinalgenomics.com/aspergillus-dangerous-cannabis-pathogen/#cases). (pic.ncbi.nlm.gov/articales/PMC8883434/).

Inhaling pesticides can turn at least one chemical - Eagle20 - into something more dangerous to the body (hydrogen cyanide can cause multi-system illness). The Office of Cannabis Policy found Eagle20 on medical cannabis products they tested. "It is crucial that the long-term effects of trace amounts of pesticides in cannabis continue to be investigated and that the use of these compounds can be regulated to ensure that the consumption of cannabis products does not compromise the health of consumers."⁴

As for the category of against, we need to stop putting consumers and patients at risk. We are opposed to any attempts that do not recognize that reform is needed. We recognize that cannabis has been a product that has faced severe stigmatization; however, until we have additional research on the impacts of use, we should be cautious about lessening standards.

We do want to note that LD 1897 includes repealing the mandatory testing requirement for yeast and mold for adult-use cannabis and cannabis products. We have had many productive conversations with industry representatives and understand that some tweaks might be needed to the program. All things flagged within yeast and mold are not made equal. However, as noted, Aspergillus is extremely dangerous to the human body.

Medical cannabis specialists in Maine with deep knowledge and a website are clear that their products are "free of harmful contaminants". So let the buyer, or patient, beware, but the buyer is not always aware and this can put their health at risk in very big ways.

We are looking forward to working on a possible fix to ensure that both medical and adult-use can produce a safe product for our patients and recreational consumers. We are also looking forward to working with the committee to make this fix this Session. Although the end of the Session is near, it is now time to act.

Thank you for considering the thoughts of Maine's physicians, and we look forward to being a meaningful stakeholder in these conversations.

Thank you,

Patty Hymanson, MD

³ medicinalgenomics.com/aspergillus-dangerous-cannabis-pathogen/

⁴ cannactiva.com/en/pesticides-in-cannabis/.