

Zoe Brokos  
Portland

Hello esteemed members of the committee. My name is Zoe Brokos and I am an organizer with the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project (ME-RAP). I am here in support of this bill because I believe that our State of Maine Department of Corrections should support “All pathways to recovery”. This statement means that our community should provide options to people with substance use disorder who are seeking a path to recovery that is appropriate for them. This pathway could include medication like Suboxone, Methadone or injectable naltrexone. Or, this pathway could not include medications at all.

Our Maine Department of Corrections has worked hard to increase access to medication assisted treatment and there are many people who have benefited from the service. However, this bill would increase access to ensure that people, while incarcerated, can choose the recovery pathway that is best for them. Many people with substance use disorder have tried medications and for many, they work. They need the opportunity to continue their recovery journey while incarcerated.

For others, they were not offered a variety of treatment options and therefore, upon release, they had a recurrence of use, overdosed and died.

The need for more comprehensive offerings became clear to me in July of 2018 when I was contacted by a client about to be released from prison in Maine. He wanted to explore MAT and he was desperate for resources. He got out of prison on July 1, 2018. He connected with case management, got connected with opportunities and was given an appointment for a methadone clinic intake on July 3. He died of a fatal overdose on July 2.

You see, it is imperative that people who want to engage in recovery resources are given that opportunity while incarcerated. More so, it is necessary that those resources include a variety of options. Recovery isn't the same for everyone. One gold standard doesn't always work for everyone. Access while incarcerated and continued immediately upon release is vital to reducing overdose deaths in Maine.

So today I ask you, please pass LD 663. This bill would expand access to treatment options for people experiencing incarceration and allow individuals to choose what works best for them.