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Introducing LD 1115, “An Act To Improve Access to HIV Prevention Medications”

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

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Representative Tepler and honorable colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Senator Heather Sanborn and I represent Senate District 28, which is part of Portland and part of Westbrook. I’m here today to introduce LD 1115, “An Act To Improve Access to HIV Prevention Medications.”

When I was growing up, HIV was spreading rapidly and people who acquired HIV were very likely to develop AIDS and become very sick with a shortened life-expectancy. Today, we are incredibly fortunate to have PrEP, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, and PEP, Post-Exposure Prophylaxis, medications that are highly effective in preventing HIV either before or after one is exposed to the virus. Just like so many other drugs in this country, however, there are barriers that can get in the way of people accessing PrEP and PEP medication. LD 1115 will work to break down some of these existing challenges that stand in the way of folks accessing these lifesaving drugs.

This bill requires an insurance provider to cover at least one HIV prevention drug, and for at least one drug to be covered without needing a prior authorization. The bill also sets up a process in which under certain conditions, pharmacists can dispense up to a 60 day supply of an HIV prevention drug without a prescription from a physician. Pharmacists would need to adhere to board approved rules and protocols in doing so.

We need to do everything we can to increase access to PrEP and PEP drugs in Maine. Passing this legislation will help us get there by requiring insurance coverage, speeding up the process of getting the medication, and increasing access by enlisting the help of participating pharmacies.

Thank you for your time, and I would welcome any questions you have.