



CITY OF PORTLAND

To: Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
From: Kate M. Snyder, Mayor
Date: April 7, 2021
RE: Testimony in support of LD 1115 (*An Act to Improve Access to HIV Prevention Medication*)

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services: The City of Portland strongly supports the passing of LD1115, *An Act to Improve Access to HIV Prevention Medication*. This bill would expand access to HIV prevention medication PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) and PEP (Post- Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) via lowering insurance barriers and facilitating more timely treatment. This bill provides better access to this highly effective HIV prevention medication and reduces the overall transmission rate of HIV.

PrEP and PEP are daily medications that reduce the transmission of HIV by 99%; having these medications more readily available would positively impact people's safety and health, as well as assist in reducing HIV transmission rates. Gaining access to these medications can be difficult, intimidating, time consuming, and expensive. LD 1115 would help to address these obstacles by expanding insurance coverage and creating opportunities for those who are uninsured to receive these medications.

LD 1115 will also encourage more educational opportunities related to the proper administration and understanding of the benefits of PrEP/PEP within our healthcare system. This is of the utmost importance for individuals experiencing possible exposure to HIV.

The City of Portland sees this bill as an opportunity to make these medications more accessible and allow participating pharmacies to act as an initial point of contact in first obtaining these medications and then referring individuals to primary care physicians or other medical programs. It would open up opportunities for ongoing education regarding PrEP/PEP and prevention strategies to local health care providers.

Passing LD 1115 is an important step forward in lowering barriers for all people, decreasing HIV infections in Maine, and establishing HIV prevention as an important public health policy.