

April 23, 2021

LD 1428, An Act to Increase the Availability of Intranasal Naloxone in Community Settings
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good morning, Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. I am Representative Jan Dodge of House District 97 which includes Belfast, Northport and Waldo. I am here to present LD 1428, An Act to Increase the Availability of Intranasal Naloxone in Community Settings.

As you may know, Maine lost over five-hundred (500) people last year to preventable overdose death. One of the best methods we have in preventing overdose death is making sure naloxone is available wherever it is needed.

In working on this bill, I spoke with several organizations that distribute naloxone and interact with local groups about the level of need in our communities. The need is deeper than I, and many others may realize and the number of opioid overdoses appears to be growing. COVID-19 has negatively influenced social and emotional health and has been identified as a possible contributing factor to increased drug use and number of drug related deaths. With only a few local libraries or community centers obtaining and training to administer naloxone from a physician's standing order, I believe it is incredibly important at this time for Maine organizations to know they can carry naloxone in case of emergencies and to urge them to have it on their premises. The knowledge that a form of naloxone was accessible at soup kitchens, Y's, after school centers and other community-based entities could save lives.

While the intent of this bill can be captured through targeted education and a broad-based awareness campaign, I hope you as a committee will also preserve the spirit of the bill. More needs to be done to reduce overdose deaths. Efforts are underway to expand availability in Maine schools. Existing education and pharmacist statutes are being reviewed and strategic planning is ongoing. To make sure we have a bill in place for possible legislative action in the second session of the 130th to increase access to this safe, life-saving drug, I respectfully ask the committee to consider carrying over LD 1428. I make this request after consultation with Whitney Parrish of the Maine Health Alliance, who also consulted Mr. Gordon Page of the Opioid Task Force. I look forward to working with your committee and stakeholder groups to increase access to naloxone.

Thank you. I will try to answer your questions.