

Ellen Farnsworth
Maine Nurse Practitioner Association

April 23, 2021

Health and Human Services Committee

RE: LD 1177 An Act to Increase Access to Intranasal Hydrochloride for Syringe Services Programs

Dear Senator Nat Claxton, Representative Michele Meyer and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

We are Ellen Farnsworth and Sylvia Ingerson, nurse practitioners working in the field of substance abuse treatment and members of the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association Legislative Committee. We are testifying in support of LD 1177 on behalf of the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association.

Naloxone is the gold standard treatment for Opioid overdose as endorsed by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the American Society for Addiction Medicine (ASAM). Prescriptions and education on use should be available to persons being treated for Opioid Use disorder (OUD), their family members, as well as emergency personnel such as police and firefighters. It can be given as an auto-injection or as nasal spray. Prescriptions should be given at their intake visit to begin medication assisted treatment, before release from emergency rooms for an overdose, when they are released from incarceration, when they attend needle exchange programs.

The Surgeon General and SAMHSA recommend Naloxone for use in individuals at risk for overdose which includes individuals who are using opioids, involved in needle exchange programs, receiving medication-assisted treatment, or are incarcerated and about to be released or recently released. Naloxone is only a temporary treatment, may need to be repeated until critical medical intervention arrives.

Needle Exchange Programs, hypodermic apparatus exchange programs, and overdose prevention programs can distribute Naloxone or Narcan nasal spray along with education to prevent overdose in accordance with rules established by the Department of Health and Human Services. Each person struggling with opioid use needs to have ready access to Naloxone. Needle exchange and prevention education programs are in contact with those who need to have Narcan readily available. Timely access is critical.

Naloxone, especially nasal Narcan is a temporary short acting (2-3 minutes with two allowable doses per pack) overdose reversal that can make the difference between life and death until professional help can arrive. Persons who are actively using, those in recovery, their friends and their family members will be the first to recognize a fellow person in overdose. The quick use of Naloxone to reverse overdose can save lives. With the increasing numbers of deaths from overdose during this Opioid Epidemic let's stem the tide with more Naloxone in the hands of people at risk.

We respectfully ask that you vote LD 1177 Ought to Pass.
Thank you for your attention to this important bill.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Ingerson, PMH-NP, CNS, LADC
Ellen Farnsworth, MSN, MEd, ANP-BC, NP-C