

To: Maine Legislature - Committee on Health and Human Services

Date: Hearing Date April 27, 2021 Re: Testimony on LD 1553

To: Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and Honorable Members of the HHS committee.

My name is Dr. Zev Myerowitz. I am the Director of Health Services at Cape Integrative Health (CIH), a 13 provider group located in Cape Elizabeth, ME where I additionally reside. My testimony today is in support of LD 1553

This bill will not expand scope, this bill will only allow those in greatest need of medical support to have the same access of care mandated for all third-party payers in Maine. It is needed more than ever.

During one of Gordon Smith's Maine Rural Health Collaborative presentations, he provided a best estimate of the total cost to the healthcare system for one opioid addicted hospital admission to be approximately \$500,000. Governor Mill's most recent report on the opioid crisis revealed a 25% increase in overdose-related deaths. At 503 deaths cited for 2020, the annual opioid crisis exceeded COVID-19 deaths for the same year. All standard medical algorithms recommend conservative care prior to opioid prescriptions and yet our neediest populations cannot afford the cost of care due to financial discrimination. If this bill prevents one person in pain from falling down the path of addiction, it will have not only paid for itself, but additionally saved resources for other areas of need. I applaud Governor Mill's actions on this topic and expansion of treatment options, this bill adds to current efforts by providing a cost-effective means of preventing opioid addiction through greater access to treatment prior to addiction. To be clear in my statement: It is currently well accepted that a major fraction of opioid addiction arrives through an individual's self-medication and treatment of musculoskeletal pain. This bill would enable us to further work collaboratively with the medical community in fighting for the great people of Maine.

I would like to note that the prior 2019 fiscal note inappropriately overestimated the amount of acupuncture performed by chiropractors. Approximately half of the state's estimated \$257,367 responsibility for 2020-2021 included performance of chiropractic acupuncture which was estimated to be performed in each treatment session. Currently there are only 12 of 364 active chiropractic licenses in Maine having the additional chiropractic acupuncture authority allowing them to perform this procedure. Additionally since this bill was last heard Medicare now covers the performance of acupuncture for chronic low back pain and this ameliorates any prior concerns of federal not covering this particular service.

I please ask you to vote "Ought to Pass on LD 1553".

Respectfully Submitted,

Zev Myerowitz Jr. D.C., MS., L.Ac.

Director: Health Services  
Cape Integrative Health  
[drzev@capeintegrativehealth.com](mailto:drzev@capeintegrativehealth.com)  
207.799.9950