

Patty Hymanson  
House District 4  
LD 1582

LD 1582 NFNA, adding information

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and honorable, hard-working members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

I am Patty Hymanson, representing House District 4, parts of York, Wells, Sanford and all of Ogunquit, testifying neither-for-nor-against LD 1582, An Act to Enact the Maine Psilocybin Services Act, in order to add information. This bill presents a regulatory framework and I would like to testify in support of the therapeutic possibilities of psychedelic-assisted therapy.

A psychotherapist colleague on the Seacoast, in a specialized VA clinic, treated veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder related to their deployments. As a neurologist in practice, I would converse with him about how intractable the symptoms of PTSD were and how devastating. A variety of treatments would come and go, even ones given during deployment to prevent PTSD, none really helped cure, or prevent, only manage. Something about the brain had been altered by the traumatic experience and it could not always be reset.

Psychedelic-assisted therapy has the chance to reset the brain so that the person's attention, either conscious or unconscious, is diverted to other thoughts that have a neurochemistry attached to them that is happy rather than fiercely scary.

One of my best friends from college, a bright, accomplished woman, developed major depression and PTSD. Five years ago she was suicidal. Years of group- and individual therapy, crisis management, multiple medications kept her afloat but not truly functional. Living in the Boston area, she explored using psychedelic-assisted therapy through a talented group of medical professionals. The therapy has been slow and deliberate with a stable group of people, a well-trained therapist. The group was meeting by Zoom weekly, once a month together to discuss what they intended to bring out, take the psychedelic with guidance, then the next day integrate what they experienced with what their intentions had been. Slowly over time my friend was transformed. She is joyous to have let go of the depression, not beating it back every day. Her mind and her body are no longer suddenly forced back to the old memories or feelings. Now, she uses micro-doses that do not produce the psychedelic experiences.

I have to say, I watched this process she went through with trepidation and skepticism but knew she was working with clinicians with integrity. It worked.

My purpose for testifying is to validate that psychedelic-assisted therapy holds promise for treating intractable PTSD and depression, maybe other mind-body-brain disorders. It seems that the psychedelic assists the therapy and the therapeutic structure I described is important to the successful treatment. That being said, there are research pharmaceutical companies that are looking to create a medication that works on the brain in ways similar to the psychedelics but does not produce the alterations in perception.

Exploring this issue for the State of Maine might start with a task force panel to look at this therapy, what other states are doing, what a regulatory framework would look like and next steps.

Thank you for your attention. I am happy to answer questions as I am able.