

**Testimony of BJ McCollister on behalf of New Approach in Support of LD 1582, *An Act To Enact the Maine Psilocybin Services Act.***

February 1, 2022

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is BJ McCollister and I am the President of The Resurgam Group. Today I am testifying before you today in support of LD1582 on behalf of my client, New Approach.

Academic research from Johns Hopkins University and many other universities across the U.S. has shown that psilocybin can be effective in treating depression, anxiety, and trauma. Thanks to the promise of these studies, psilocybin has been granted a "breakthrough" treatment status by the FDA - a status reserved for when research demonstrates a new treatment method is more effective than the current standards of care. In 2020, a \$26.9 million grant was awarded to the University of North Carolina from the U.S. Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency to research psilocybin with an aim to "effectively and rapidly treat depression, anxiety, and substance abuse without major side effects."

Considering these ongoing clinical trials and research, a categorization by the FDA as a "breakthrough" treatment, and the use of psilocybin by many communities for their healing properties, passing LD1582 is more timely than ever. This bill will ensure that those most in need of treatment, including veterans, victims with PTSD, and those who need end of life care will have access to life-changing therapies. It's why places like Oregon, Texas, and a growing number states and municipalities on all ends of the political spectrum have advanced legislation to create a pathway for psilocybin treatment for their residents.

It's no secret, we are in the midst of a mental health crisis in which many of those suffering from mental health traumas have been unsuccessful in treating their conditions with traditional therapies, this is especially true of our veteran's communities that have been suffering with few treatment options available. Allowing the use of these medicines with strict guardrails will allow those most in need to access these treatments.

As the committee works this bill, we'd provide the following suggestions for consideration:

- Create language that would allow service centers to produce psilocybin. A limited amount of psilocybin is needed for treatment and this means that production may be best suited for the treatment environment.
- Develop opportunity for some at-home treatment options for patients that are unable to go to a facility for medical reasons. This is particularly important for palliative care.
- Add protections for recommending physicians and licensed facilitators so long as they have other professional licenses.
- Adjust language on labeling requirements. The language currently mirrors the marijuana requirements for labeling and packaging - you may consider having the department

determine different standards for psilocybin because it will not available in the same way marijuana is. As a reminder, this program requires that psilocybin stay at the healing center, consumed under supervision. Psilocybin is not allowed to be taken home.

In closing, former Texas Governor Rick Perry put it best, that "these compounds are different than no other compound that we would have in our arsenal. If you will use it properly, it can save lives."

We ask that you support LD1582.