



Testimony of Neil Korsen, Maine Lung Cancer Coalition Neither For Nor Against LD 1693

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Neil Korsen, MD, Chair of the Maine Lung Cancer Coalition, and I am here to testify Neither For Nor Against LD 1693.

The MLCC is a multidisciplinary, multi-sector partnership that has been working across Maine since 2016 to: 1) Engage and educate the public, patients, health care providers, health care payers, and policymakers about evidence-based lung cancer prevention and screening practices; and 2) Develop, implement, and evaluate innovative programs to increase access to evidence-based lung cancer prevention, screening, and treatment services to the entire Maine population, including residents of rural underserved areas.

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer of both men and women in the United States, leading to more than 150,000 deaths per year. In Maine, our lung cancer rates rank us 7th highest among all states for new lung cancer cases. Approximately 75% of lung cancer cases in Maine are detected late, when treatment is difficult and survival rates are low. While lung cancer has many causes, **research shows that tobacco use is the number one risk factor for lung cancer: 80-90% of lung cancer deaths in the U.S. are caused by tobacco use. The impact extends to people who don't smoke as well: secondhand smoke causes approximately 7,330 deaths from lung cancer every year.**

Because of the importance of tobacco treatment in the prevention of lung cancer, we support the overall intent of this bill to fully fund the state tobacco prevention and treatment program at the US CDC recommended level of \$15.9 million per year. We also support the efforts to ban flavored tobacco products and to raise the tax on tobacco products.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill.

Neil Korsen, MD, MS

Chair, Maine Lung Cancer Coalition