



Testimony before the Health and Human Services Committee on LD 1429, *An Act To Fund Opioid Use Disorder Prevention and Treatment*

Darcy Shargo, CEO, Maine Primary Care Association  
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Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee—I am Darcy Shargo, and I serve as CEO of the Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA).

I am sharing testimony today in support of LD 1429, *An Act To Fund Opioid Use Disorder Prevention and Treatment*. On behalf of MPCA and its members, which include all of Maine's 19 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and one FQHC Look-Alike, I encourage you to vote in favor of this bill.

Maine's FQHCs, also known as Community Health Centers, provide comprehensive primary and preventive care for approximately 1 in 6 Maine people. This comprehensive care includes the assessment and treatment of opiate use disorder (as well as other substance use disorders).

As the largest primary care network in the state, Maine's FQHCs have found themselves on the front lines of the opiate epidemic. Recognizing this challenge, our health centers have been working as a group to develop innovative and effective approaches to respond to this crisis. Creativity alone is not enough to address the epidemic, however; to build new capabilities that enable a rapid response for those seeking help, additional investments are critical. Both by mission and by federal law, health centers must deliver care, including substance abuse treatment, to all who seek it, regardless of ability to pay. Underinsured and uninsured patients are a large part of the population that receive treatment, and the revenue derived from those who can pay is not sufficient to support new—and more robust—responses to the opioid crisis.

In LD 1429, Senator Jackson and the other sponsors of this bill have taken an important step toward making needed investments to support treatment and prevention efforts. They have recognized that prescription opiates, and the manner in which they have been marketed, play no small part in the scope and severity of this epidemic.

For these reasons, MPCA urges this Committee to recommend passage of this bill.

Thank you for considering our request, and please do not hesitate to contact me at [dshargo@mepca.org](mailto:dshargo@mepca.org) if you have any follow up questions.