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Commissioner



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March 9, 2020

Senator Geoff Gratwick, Chair
Representative Patty Hymanson, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 2117 – *An Act to Expand and Rename the Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program*

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter in support of LD 2117, An Act To Expand and Rename the Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program. I regret that I am not able to join you in person today. The Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) is the responsibility of the Office of Behavioral Health.

LD 2117 expands the PMP by requiring dispensers to report all prescription medications, rather than controlled substances only. Currently, Maine statute requires the reporting of controlled substances, which includes schedules II, III, and IV. This excludes, for example, the reporting of most blood pressure and cholesterol medications. Expanding the reporting to all prescriptions allows for additional patient safeguards, such as decreasing the likelihood of adverse drug interactions as well as decreasing the overprescribing of medications (both from multiple different prescribers and in multiple different prescriptions).

Currently, Maine law allows a chief medical officer, medical director, or other administrative prescriber employed by a licensed hospital to access Prescription Monitoring Program information when it relates to prescriptions written by prescribers employed by that hospital. The law as written inadvertently disallowed this same access at federally qualified health centers and medical practices. LD 2117 rectifies this shortcoming by expanding access to Prescription Monitoring Program information to allow for the same access to chief medical officers in FQHCs and other medical practices as in licensed hospitals, insuring they are able to provide proper oversight of prescribers under their supervision.

The Department feels strongly that expanding the Prescription Monitoring Program in the manner set out in this bill is an important step in addressing the opioid crisis in Maine and insuring safer medical practice for Mainers. We encourage the Committee to vote ought to pass on LD 2117.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J M Pollard PhD".

Jessica M. Pollard, PhD
Director, Office of Behavioral Health