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I am writing in support of LD 1686, a law to prevent overdose deaths in Maine. This law would increase the chance that someone, anyone, who overdoses on heroin, or other opiate, would survive.

This law is comprised of many necessary parts. I'd like to address three.

The first allows prescribers, such as me, to authorize the dispensing of naloxone (narcane) to any person above the age of 18 if deemed at risk. There is no chance (zero) that this medicine will be the cause of death, and there is no evidence that, if dispensed along with proper information about its use, anyone will abuse this medicine in any way. There is, as far as we now know, no street value for this medicine.

Moreover, there is good evidence about its life-saving uses. More than 50,000 doses of medicine have been dispensed across the country, and more than 10,000 times it has been used properly, and effectively, without a single case of abuse.

Secondly, there is an immunity from prosecution clause written into this law, necessary to allow anyone to call for help after administering naloxone without fearing arrest or prosecution. This clause has been shown to be necessary in order for overdosed people to receive timely intervention.

Thirdly, it excludes prescribers from sanction by their overseeing certification boards. This is needed so that as many prescribers and pharmacists will be willing to act without fear of hearings or disciplinary action. It also protects these same professionals from civil liability related to their prescribing or dispensing naloxone.

I would ask that you carefully consider both Maine's current epidemic of overdoses and deaths, as well as other states' experiences with these types of laws, and their effects on the overdose death rate where they have been enacted and utilized.

Thank you.

Richard Fein, D.O