



Steven L. D'Amato's Testimony

Statement in Support of LD 273

APRIL 20, 2017

Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to present in support of LD 273. My name is Steven D'Amato and I am a clinical pharmacist and the Executive Director of New England Cancer Specialists. We are the largest private medical oncology practice in Maine and we have experienced firsthand the devastating effects of opioid abuse and addiction. We have a physician who recently lost his son to opioid abuse and we have seen the effect on our own organizations health care premiums due to cases of opioid addiction. This is a national epidemic and we applaud the State Of Maine for taking a proactive role in addressing the opioid epidemic and implementing policies to help educate and protect the caregivers and citizens of Maine.

For almost all of my career I have been an advocate of effective pain management in patients with cancer-related pain. I have seen the effects on patients and families when cancer related pain is not controlled or there is limited access to opioids needed to control their pain. It is imperative that measures that are enacted to deter opioid abuse and addition preserve access and do not create barriers to effective pain management for this vulnerable population of patients.

The American Medical Association, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, and the Center for Disease Control, have published detailed documents that demonstrate the scope and impact of this national epidemic and approaches to preserve access to effective treatment of cancer-related pain.

New England Cancer Specialists strongly endorses LD 273 which expands the exception to the requirement to check prescription monitoring information, to include when a health care professional orders, prescribes or administers medication to a person suffering from pain associated with cancer treatment or end-of-life, palliative or hospice care. Thank you.