



## Recommendations for Sensible Drug Policy

Prepared by The Maine Coalition for Sensible Drug Policy

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### A CRISIS KILLING MAINE

- 418** # of **fatal drug overdoses** in Maine in 2017.
- 366%** Increase in the # of cases of acute **Hepatitis C in Maine** between 2013-2016, bringing Maine to almost twice the national average and costing the State of Maine between \$18M and 24M per year.
- 25,000** Estimated number of people living in Maine in 2016, **who needed but did not receive treatment** for illicit drug use.
- 33%** Estimated percentage of IV drug users in Maine **reluctant to seek medical help**.
- 76.9%** National rate at which **drug offenders are likely to be rearrested** within a year of release.
- 19.5%** Percentage of Maine's **male prison population who are non-white**, despite accounting for 3.4% of Maine's population.

### A BETTER WAY FORWARD

As the devastating toll of Maine's drug crisis has continued to mount over the last several years, it has become clear that dramatic action must be taken to transform our state's drug policies. We believe that the following principles must guide our way forward if we are to restore health, safety and justice to Maine:

#### *Primary prevention*

Addressing the mental, physical and environmental factors that drive problematic drug use.

#### *Harm Reduction*

Developing services around the state that can directly reduce the likelihood of injury and death from drug use.

#### *Treatment and Care*

Increasing widespread access to healthcare, counseling and other forms of evidence-proven drug treatment.

#### *Recovery Supports*

Advancing programs that can sustain the health and success of people in recovery from drug use.

#### *Criminal Justice Reform*

Aligning Maine's criminal courts with public health evidence and a compassionate approach to drug use.

#### *Anti-Discrimination*

Reducing stigma and discrimination experienced by people who use drugs (PWUD) and those in recovery.

### SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

ACLU Maine - Amistad - Church of Safe Injection - Coastal Recovery Community Center - Frannie Peabody Center Health Equity Alliance - James' Place - Journey House Recovery - Maine Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers - Maine Equal Justice Partners - Maine Family Planning - Maine HIV Advisory Committee - Maine People's Alliance - Maine Prisoners Advocacy Coalition - Maine Prisoners Reentry Network - Mid-Coast Recovery Coalition - Penobscot CHC - Portland OPS - Wabanaki Health and Wellness - Young People in Recovery, ME

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

<p><b>1. Address Trauma and Deprivation</b></p> <p>Improve and expand safety net programs that reduce the poverty, marginalization and adverse childhood experiences that often contribute to chaotic substance use.</p>	<p><b>2. Increase Youth Resiliency</b></p> <p>Establish evidence-based youth programs in schools and communities to develop resiliency and mitigate the effects of childhood trauma.</p>	<p><b>3. Harm Reduction Strategies</b></p> <p>Support and fund statewide outreach and harm reduction programs, including needle exchanges and Naloxone distribution, that provide critical resources to people who use drugs.</p>
<p><b>4. Overdose Prevention Sites</b></p> <p>Fund and sanction the establishment of overdose prevention sites in urban areas statewide.</p>	<p><b>5. Case Management</b></p> <p>Expand the current MaineCare eligibility criteria to allow more people who use drugs to access case management services.</p>	<p><b>6. Reduce Provider Stigma</b></p> <p>Support and fund initiatives that teach healthcare providers more compassionate, knowledgeable approaches to treating people who use drugs.</p>
<p><b>7. Reduce Barriers to Care</b></p> <p>Reform the treatment system and expand access to affordable treatment by addressing gaps in health insurance coverage.</p>	<p><b>8. Increase Access to MAT</b></p> <p>Establish statewide medication assisted treatment (MAT) services in every county and reduce barriers to funding and accessing them.</p>	<p><b>9. Expand Medical Detox</b></p> <p>Support and fund the establishment of medical detox services in every county to help people withdraw safely from opioids.</p>
<p><b>10. Recovery Community Organizations</b></p> <p>Support recovery community organizations across the state, so that every town in Maine is home to a supportive, accessible community of people in recovery.</p>	<p><b>11. Supportive Housing</b></p> <p>Certify and fund recovery residences across the state to ensure that all Mainers in early recovery have access to safe and affordable housing.</p>	<p><b>12. Decriminalization</b></p> <p>Lift all criminal penalties on possessing and using drugs in order to reduce discrimination against people who use drugs and redirect funds from jails to treatment.</p>
<p><b>13. Treatment in Jails and Prisons</b></p> <p>Make treatment readily available both to people inside of Maine's correctional centers as well as to people re-entering society after incarceration.</p>	<p><b>14. Diversion Away from the Justice System</b></p> <p>Reduce rates of incarceration for non-violent and drug-related crimes by diverting people who are using drugs out of jail and into community based resources.</p>	<p><b>15. Address Racial Bias in Policy and Practice</b></p> <p>Collect and analyze information on how Maine's criminal justice system impacts our state's communities of color and extend this analysis to all proposed Maine legislation.</p>
<p><b>16. Employment Opportunities</b></p> <p>Support and fund programs offering meaningful employment and vocational training opportunities to people in early recovery.</p>	<p><b>17. End Discrimination</b></p> <p>Create and enforce non-discrimination policies, especially in regards to housing, access to medical care and employment, that protect the human rights of people both using drugs and in recovery.</p>	<p><b>18. Reduce Stigma Through Education</b></p> <p>Provide and fund statewide educational campaigns that dismantle the common stereotypes of people both using drugs and in recovery and make it easier for them to access care.</p>