



*Maine State Legislature  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0002*

January 25, 2018

Chairman Joe Bruno and the  
Maine Pharmacy Board  
35 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine  
04333-0035

Dear Chairman Bruno:

In 2016, a record 378 people lost their lives as a result of an overdose. This 40 percent increase over 2015 is largely attributed to opioid drugs, especially fentanyl and heroin, and signals a deepening of this crisis in our state.

It is exactly because of this crisis that in 2016 our colleagues in the State House passed legislation to allow pharmacists to dispense the lifesaving drug naloxone without a prescription (LD 1547, An Act To Facilitate Access to Naloxone Hydrochloride). Naloxone has been used thousands of times in Maine in recent years to revive patients suffering from the potentially deadly effects of an overdose from heroin, fentanyl or other opioids. Last year, at the request of the Board of Pharmacy, we clarified the language with an amended bill (LD 1594, An Act Regarding the Dispensing of Naloxone Hydrochloride by Pharmacists) with the intent that dispensation would begin soon after rulemaking.

It is our understanding that the Maine Board of Pharmacy voted unanimously August 3, 2017 to approve such rules. However, we have been troubled by recent press reports that there is a hold up in the rules being formally published as a result of inaction by the Executive Branch. It is also equally concerning that Maine's pharmacies are currently following differing protocol in dispensation due to a lack of clarity regarding these rules.

We respectfully request that the Board of Pharmacy promulgate these rules, so pharmacies have the necessary guidelines to sell this drug in a legal manner. We urge you to move quickly to provide the clarity that is demonstrably necessary.

We hope that you will agree that publishing these rules and officially making naloxone available without a prescription – as is the case in more than 40 states – will help increase availability of the reversal drug at a time when the state is struggling to deal with an unprecedented drug crisis killing an average of one Mainer a day. We thank you in advance for moving forward on this important issue.

Please feel free to be in touch with us with any questions.

Handwritten signature of Sara Gideon in black ink.

Speaker of the House Sara Gideon

Handwritten signature of Troy Jackson in black ink.

Senate Democratic Leader Troy Jackson