

MEDIA ALERT

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Responding to the Opioid Epidemic with Emergency Legislation

*Bill submitted by Rep. Drew Gattine being heard by Health and Human Services Committee,
Wednesday, January 17*

PORTLAND, ME (January 12, 2018) — As the opioid epidemic devastated communities across Maine, Preble Street was reversing overdoses almost every week in 2017. This catastrophic public health crisis has deadly consequences to the people served by Preble Street and other social service and health providers across the state.

Representative Drew Gattine has submitted emergency legislation to address the crisis at the intersections of homelessness and the opioid epidemic. **LD 1711, Resolve, To Save Lives by Establishing a Homeless Opioid Users Service Engagement Pilot Project (H.O.U.S.E.)** will provide treatment for substance use disorders and stable housing to support recovery for opioid users who are among the most vulnerable in Maine.

On **Wednesday, January 17 at 9:30am** in the Cross Building, Room 208 at the State House in Augusta the Health and Human Services Committee will hear public comment on emergency legislation submitted by Representative Drew Gattine. **Prior to the hearing a press conference will take place at 8:45am in the State House Welcome Center.**

"Last year, for an unprecedented once every eight days Preble Street staff had to respond to life-threatening overdoses. For us, it is as real and as tragic as it comes," said Preble Street Executive Director Mark Swann. "Every day—every single day—people plead with us for housing and treatment options. And every day—every single day—we can barely offer them even a glimmer of hope."

Homeless individuals with substance use disorder have difficulty accessing traditional care—100% of people who overdosed at Preble Street sought treatment but there was none available.

With the proposed H.O.U.S.E. project, homeless individuals will have access to a “medication first” system of low-barrier Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and rapid housing with intensive support options to ensure paths to recovery—**housing is an integral and critical component of treatment that leads to recovery.**

Link to H.O.U.S.E. information sheet: <https://www.preblestreet.org/wp-content/uploads/LD-1711-information-sheet.pdf>

Link to H.O.U.S.E. bill language:

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1191&item=1&snum=128>

What: H.O.U.S.E. Press Conference

Where: State House Welcome Center

When: Wednesday, January 17, 8:45am

Who: Dr. Renee Fay-Leblanc, Greater Portland Health; Representative Drew Gattine; Brianna Nielsen (individual in recovery); Chief Michael Sauschuck, Portland Police Department; Mark Swann, Preble Street

What: H.O.U.S.E. Public Hearing

Where: Cross Building, Room 208 at the State House

When: Wednesday, January 17, 9:30am

Who: Medical providers, law enforcement officials, first responders, faith leaders, individuals in recovery, family of deceased opioid user, housing providers, social workers, advocates, survivors of human trafficking, business leaders

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