1 August 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 952, “An Act To Ensure Access to Opiate Addiction Treatment in Maine.”

I understand the drug-replacement therapy methadone has been recognized by some experts as the best evidence-based substance abuse treatment option available. But, like many people outside the treatment community, I believe that simply replacing one drug with another doesn’t actually solve the problem. Families impacted by addiction need normalcy and freedom—daily trips to a Methadone clinic year after year are not a good way to achieve that normalcy.

My administration recently added significant requirements to its Medicaid program to ensure greater accountability for methadone treatment. It makes no sense to pay for treatment that is simply perpetuating an addiction. Taxpayer dollars should be dedicated to treatment modalities that keep people moving toward true recovery. While the state’s reforms may not be perfect, we are heading in the right direction, and these reforms will continually be assessed for increased opportunities to help Mainers succeed.

This bill, among other things, would “allow” the Department of Health and Human Services to amend their rules to increase the reimbursement rate for methadone treatment. I understand this does not provide an actual increased rate; however, until we have been able to take stock of the new regulations, I am not willing to open the door to a possible rate increase. When my team at DHHS can assure me that methadone treatment is taking place in a truly clinical setting, along with the accountability of a clinical team, I would be glad to have this conversation again. I want to pay for treatment that works!

For these reasons, I return LD 952 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Paul R. LePage
Governor