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Ladies and Gentlemen:

RE: Raised Bill No. 353

Please accept this document as my written testimony regarding the above listed Bill. I am a Professional Addiction Counselor since 1995, and a Part-time Community College (Manchester) Lecturer since 1996. I also have a private practice, S.A.P Services, LLC. In my private practice I work with individuals who have safety sensitive jobs, such as truck drivers, individuals who make and examine aircraft parts, train drivers, boat and ship captains, Etc. Over the years I have had to treat several individuals who have safety sensitive jobs, who were referred to me because they were tested positive for opiate. Over the years working with individuals with addiction challenges, opiate and opioid dependence individuals seemed to have a more difficult time with opiate and opioid. It is very difficult for opiate/opioid dependent individuals to 'kick the habit,' because of the nature of these substances. Many opiate and opioid dependent individuals started out using these substances because of pain, but over time their prescribers stopped from prescribing these substances due to increase tolerance, and the fact that some of these individuals could experience respiratory and cardiac problems leading to death. Also, several individuals who started using prescribed opiate for pain, end up purchasing heroin on the streets, because heroin is cheaper than their prescribed pain medication. Someone said that there is a: "Straight line from prescribed and over the counter pain medication to shooting up heroin."

I support Raised Bill # 353, An Act Concerning Opioid Abuse, Especially Sections 3 (b) and Section 4. These sections are long overdue. LADC's should be working very closely with medical providers of opiate and opioid in an effort to screen patients who may be at risk of abusing their pain medication. LADC'S would not only screen users for abuse, but would also provide psychotherapy, case management, and referrals when necessary. The LADC'S involvement would minimize relapse, overdose, domestic violence, child abuse, criminal activities, time off from work, Etc.

Again, I appeal to the Public Health Committee to pass this Bill. In passing this Bill, the Public Health Committee would be supporting those of us who are on the front line fighting this major disease.