

**Testimony of Jason Pease  
Detective Sergeant – Criminal Investigations Division  
Lincoln County Sheriff's Office**

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Committee on Governmental Affairs  
Washington, DC 20510-6250

Senator Collins and Committee Members,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak for a few moments on the drug problem in the Mid-coast area.

My main focus of concern is Lincoln County but as you all know and have heard today the drug problem in Maine is not limited to one area.

Lincoln County has seen an increase of epidemic proportion in heroin and opiate based prescription drugs over the past 5 years. The drug problem surrounding prescription drugs has far surpassed all other drugs.

Over the past five years we in Lincoln County and throughout the State of Maine have seen an increase in crimes such as burglaries, robberies, thefts, overdoses and even deaths because of the drug problem.

Since being assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division of the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office in 1999, I have handled numerous investigations into thefts of prescription pads from doctors' offices, altering of prescriptions, forging prescriptions, and have even dealt with subjects that had been manufacturing fraudulent prescriptions on their computers.

At first we found that the majority of the prescription drug users/abusers started using the prescriptions because of illnesses, pain, or to "ween" them from heroin. But now it has been found that many of the users/abusers are on prescriptions because of their ability to obtain the pills easier by going to the doctor.

Currently we are seeing Oxycontin, Hydrocodone, Fetynal patches, Zanex, Methadone, Loratab, etc. These prescription drugs are all opiate derivatives which seems to be the "hook" for the persons using / abusing.

Oxycontin has by far been the worst prescription abused in the Mid-coast area over the past few years but any prescription that contains opium or synthetic opium is the drug of choice.

We have experienced numerous incidents where subjects from outside Lincoln County were traveling to doctors in our area in order to get multiple prescriptions from different doctors.

The subjects would travel to doctors in small towns like Waldoboro and visit a family medical office. The subjects are from areas like Brunswick, which is a town that has 2 major hospitals and hundreds of doctors. This “doctor shopping” has occurred in many towns throughout Maine and is not limited to just rural areas being hit.

Subjects have even been using doctors through the VA program to accomplish their goals of obtaining numerous prescriptions to use and sell.

In similar acts subjects when making, forging prescriptions, or filling “doctor shopping” prescriptions are traveling to smaller local pharmacies. The reason for filling the prescriptions in the smaller pharmacies is they do not have the tracking systems like a Hannafords or Rite -Aid does.

Another problem we have noticed is that of the younger crowd going into their parents’, grandparents’ or other family members’ prescriptions and using or selling pills. Most of the time the prescriptions are pain killers (narcotics) but from time to time they end up taking pills which they have no idea what they are or what they will do.

We as Law Enforcement in Maine and all over the United States are dealing with this dilemma of prescription drug abuse. If there was some method or way to link all doctors and pharmacies to one system of tracking prescription drugs to clients it may assist in the fight against drug abuse. There are such systems in place for tracking motor vehicles so I feel we can come up with a system for the prescription drug problem.

Again, I would like to thank you for your time and I am willing to field any questions you may have.

Jason Pease  
Detective Sergeant - Criminal Investigations Division  
Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office.