

**December 29, 2011**

## **Instructions**

1. Make sure you spell words correctly. If you are using a computer use a spell check and if you don't have access to a computer ask a friend to read your letter over for you.
2. er over for you.
3. Don't forget to check your grammar too. Most spell checks include grammar checks also.
4. Read your letter over to make sure it makes sense. It's better if someone else can help with this.
5. Start your letter explaining how methadone changed your life. This does not have to be long and in fact is better when you are short and to the point. The first few sentences usually draw the reader's attention. After talking about how methadone helped you and your accomplishments you can talk about your drug use and what addiction did to you and your family. Finish the letter with asking the governor to support methadone and that in particular the methadone patients in Maine need his understanding and acceptance.
6. You do not have to sign the letter with your name and in fact it might be even more effective if you did not and instead wrote: "I cannot sign my real name because of the prejudice and stigma directed at methadone treatment and patients". If you wanted you could sign "A Patient in New Jersey".
7. Programs can help by mailing the letters for their patients. They can be mailed in 1 package. Programs do not have to ask every patient to write a letter. If 20 programs sent 10 letters each that would be 200 letters and in politics that is usually considered significant.

## **Letter Structure**

(date)

The Honorable Paul R. LePage  
Governor of Maine  
1 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0001

Dear Governor LePage:

Start the first section with an introduction and telling him how methadone saved your life: I am a methadone patient and I wanted you to know that methadone treatment does work. The day I entered treatment over 20 years ago was the worst day of my life with the exception of the day I was sentenced to 10 years for drug sales. I thought I was a failure because I had tried to stop many times and each time within a few weeks I would be using drugs again. If I had only realized on that day how much my life would change in the next years. Within the first year I began to repair the damage that drugs had done to my marriage, children and family. I got a job as a plumber's helper and began to learn a skill that would support me and my children. I became a supervisor plumber and after 10 years decided to start my own business. I now employ 14 people: 7 plumbers, 4 helpers and 3 working in the office.

I am a success and now my mother is proud of me. I own a house and my son will be starting Boston University in the Fall. Without methadone I would probably be dead or in jail for life.

Five years ago I tried to withdraw from methadone. After all I no longer hung out with drug users and had not used drugs since the first month of treatment. So I went down to 0 mgs which was not that difficult because I did it slow, took vitamin supplements, exercised, learned relapse prevention, and had a support group. From about 10 mgs to a few weeks of my last dose I felt terrible. I can only explain it as depression. And then I began to have dreams about drugs – I had not had them in over 20 years. I began to be afraid that I would start using drugs so I returned to the program and talked with the doctor. She immediately started me on methadone and explained that this was fairly common for people that had used drugs for a long time.

The new regulations allow me to go to the program monthly. This helps to make my life fairly normal.

Please give the people with an addiction in Maine the same opportunities that I had. Methadone does work but most patients need time to get control of their addiction, get their health back and begin to repair the damage that drugs have done to their lives.

I cannot sign my name because of the misunderstandings and prejudice directed at methadone treatment.

Sincerely,

### **Mailing Your Letter**

You can mail your letter or if you have access to a computer you can email it to: [governor@maine.gov](mailto:governor@maine.gov)