Sample Letters written to Legislators
The following are copies of letters and emails that NAMI NH members have sent to their legislators.

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Dear Representative,

The House Finance Committee has proposed cuts that would decimate the budgets of community health centers, mental health centers and other organizations that make up the social safety net. I understand budgets are about priorities but, as my representative, I ask that PEOPLE be your first priority. The hardest hit will be the most vulnerable; those with disabilities, mental illness and substance use disorders, as well as children and the homeless.

Treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders do **work**, if the patient can get it. **Accessible, timely treatment is necessary for best outcomes-it saves lives and saves families.**

Cutting coverage for almost 7,500 adults with serious mental illness and children with severe emotional disorders leads to suicides, shatters families and places burdens on the more costly systems; i.e. emergency departments, law enforcements, special education, hospitals, county and municipal governments. Many NH families take responsibility for their loved ones with mental illness 24/7 but there are some things, like treatment, that they can't do.

Cutting the state's community mental health system is unconscionable. I ask that you vote **NO** on these proposed cuts and request your colleagues do the same.

Thank you for your intense consideration of the impact these disastrous cuts will have.

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Dear Senator Odell,

I am asking you to consider scrapping the current budget and voting to start over! There are more than 7,500 New Hampshire people with mental illness who will be hurt by the current, proposed cuts to mental health services. Their families and communities will be hurt as well.

Mental illness is no one’s fault and people with this diagnosis are the most vulnerable of our citizens. With care, treatment and services many can be productive members of society. Without services, they end up in shelters, in our emergency rooms and in jails where they do not belong. And which will cost us more in the long run without contributing any solution.

Please consider starting over and doing right by people with mental illness. In challenging financial times like these, there is more need than ever!
Dear Rep. Harding,

I one of your constituents from Lebanon, and am writing to you today in my role as a National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI NH chapter) volunteer. I know from my own experiences that people with mental illness can and will recover, becoming self-sufficient and living productive, successful lives—if they are provided with the quality mental health treatment that they need. According to the National Institute on Mental Health, 26.2% of the population has a diagnosable mental illness. That equates to over 360,000 people in New Hampshire alone!

I am currently working toward a master of social work degree through UNH where I see daily the impact of proper mental health care—and more importantly, the impact of a lack of proper mental health care. Early intervention and needed services allow people with mental illness to recover. Lack of the same often leads to incarceration, long hospital stays, or time spent in homeless shelters, creating a much larger financial burden to the state.

Knowing that you are both a registered nurse and a Headrest board member, I am sure that the mental health of the people of New Hampshire must be the same priority for you that it is for me. While balancing our state budget is a priority for all of us, I hope that you will strive toward that goal while preserving as many health and human services programs as possible.

I appreciate the time you’ve spent reading my message. I know that you are on the verge of important votes on the budget. Please, if I can be a resource to you in any way on the topic of mental health, don’t hesitate to contact me. I would be happy to send you another copy of the “Where We Stand” publication produced by NAMI NH originally mailed to you in January.

All my best, and all my thanks for the work you do for New Hampshire,