



National Alliance on Mental Illness

# NAMI | New Hampshire

January 16, 2019

Honorable Chairman Patricia Klee  
State-Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs  
Legislative Office Building – Room 206  
36 North State Street  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Madam Chair and Committee Members:

My name is Ken Norton and I serve as the Executive Director of NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. I also have a family member with a serious mental illness and a co-occurring substance use disorder. On behalf of NAMI NH I am here today to offer testimony in support of HCR 4 encouraging media outlets not to broadcast the name or image of a suspected perpetrator of a mass shooting.

By way of background, I led the development of NAMI NH's Connect Suicide Prevention Training which was designated as a National Best Practice Program in suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention and which has provided training in over 40 states, 5 countries and 40 tribal nations. I have worked extensively in the area of safe messaging and media coverage of suicide including having provided trainings and briefings on this topic to the Department of Defense, the Veterans Administration, the Defense Center on Excellence and Psychological Health as well as to media and suicide prevention advocates in New Hampshire and other states. In addition, I also serve on the Steering Committee for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Although rare, suicide contagion is a well-researched and documented phenomenon. While we want media to report on suicide; how they report on it can increase risk or decrease risk for future suicide. Toward that end, I was part of a national workgroup which researched and published recommendations for reporting on suicide. These recommendations were endorsed by numerous organizations including the US Center for Disease Control. These recommendations are available at [www.reportingonsuicide.org](http://www.reportingonsuicide.org)

There is increasing body of research indicating that mass shooters often research and emulate previous mass shooters. Additional research indicates that they seek notoriety for their actions. Based on these emerging studies and the earlier recommendations for reporting on suicide, I participated in the development of recommendations for media coverage of mass shootings. Although there are a number of recommendations related to media coverage of the alleged shooter, they all fall under the recommendation of "Minimize reporting on the perpetrators as others might identify with or be inspired by them." The full recommendations for reporting on mass shootings can be found at [www.reportingonmassshootings.org](http://www.reportingonmassshootings.org)

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions which you may have

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Norton, LICSW  
Executive Director

*Find Help, Find Hope*

NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301  
InfoLine: 800-242-6264 • Tel. 603-225-5359 • Fax 603-228-8848 • [info@naminh.org](mailto:info@naminh.org) / [www.NAMINH.org](http://www.NAMINH.org)