



NAMI | New Hampshire

January 21, 2020

Honorable Edward Butler
House Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee
Legislative Office Building – Room 302
36 N. State Street
Concord, NH 03301

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Kenneth Norton and I serve as Executive Director of NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. I also have family members with serious mental health conditions.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) recognizes the importance of effective treatment for Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections referred to by the acronym of PANDAS. As the designated NIMH Outreach Partner for the State of New Hampshire, NAMI NH is here today to speak in support of HB 1346.

Strep is a common childhood illness with estimates being that the average grade school student can have as many as 2-3 cases of Strep each year. However, PANDAS is a relatively rare illness that can occur when antibodies which fight the strep infection get cross-wired and begin to attack brain tissue with the result being the onset of symptoms which may include severe anxiety, tics, and obsessive-compulsive behaviors as well as moodiness and irritability. A primary diagnostic criterion is a notable decrease in the child's ability to function. The onset may be rapid and concurrent with the onset of Strep or weeks and months afterward.

NAMI NH testified in support of the previous bills to recognize PANDAS and believes this bill is an important next step to monitor compliance. Currently, the NH Insurance Department is engaged in a "market conduct analysis" of mental health insurance claims and denials to check compliance with Federal Law. This bill would require a similar review for PANDAS claims. On behalf of NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, I urge you to vote HB 1346 as ought to pass.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth Norton", written in a cursive style.

Kenneth Norton, LICSW
Executive Director

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