



NAMI New Hampshire

April 14, 2021

Honorable Senator Jeb Bradley
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Chairman Bradley and committee members,

My name is Kenneth Norton and I am the Executive Director of NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. I am a licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker in the State of New Hampshire with extensive experience in working in community mental health. I have served as a subject matter expert in the areas of mental health as well as suicide prevention for the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration. Closer to home I have served on numerous legislative committees and commissions. I have also served as a licensed foster parent and I have family members with mental illness as well as with co-occurring substance use disorders

NAMI NH takes no position in relation to the overall content of HB 220 with the exception of Section II (C) lines 12-14, which we currently oppose as written, as it neglects to address non emergency mental health admissions which are a key component of our mental health system of care.

Involuntary Emergency Admission petitions have a maximum stay of 10 days. The non emergency admissions are for anyone needing to be held for longer than 10 days as well as for other legal situations eg. people charged with certain crimes who have been found not competent to stand trial. These are the longer term commitments which are heard by probate court and can be for up to 5 years.

Our recommendation is that the bill be amended to include non emergency admissions under RSA 135-C 34-54. Suggested language is italicized below

(c) Supersede the involuntary emergency admission process pursuant to RSA 135-C:27- 33; the non emergency admission process under RSA 135-C:34-54; the revocation of conditional discharge process under RSA 135-C:51; or involuntary treatment of patients compliant with RSA 135-C:57 III.

Thank you for your consideration, please contact me if you have any questions:

Respectfully,

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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