



Ken Norton to Transition from Role as Executive Director at NAMI New Hampshire

Norton has led the statewide nonprofit for more than a decade and will transition from his role in early 2022

NAMI New Hampshire Executive Director Kenneth Norton, LICSW, has announced plans to transition from his leadership role of the statewide nonprofit in early 2022. An internationally recognized suicide prevention expert, Norton began employment with NAMI NH in 2003 to help develop and implement the Connect Suicide Prevention Program. He became Executive Director in 2011 and has overseen a sustained period of growth that included a quadrupling of staff, budget, and numbers of individuals served, as well as the agency's recognition with the Nonprofit Impact Award from the NH Center for Nonprofits in 2019.

On his time with the organization, Norton noted, "It has been the honor of my lifetime to serve as Executive Director of NAMI NH. As a family member of people with mental illness, I have a longstanding and deep affinity for NAMI NH. I look forward to continuing to support the organization and its mission." NAMI NH Board President Russell Conte remarked, "Past and present Board Members recognize the strength of Ken's leadership, advocacy and grassroots approach to NAMI NH's efforts. He has made it his life's work to provide a safe, stable and inclusive environment for hope, recovery and mental health for all." In sharing his plans with NAMI NH staff, Norton wrote, "As an organization, NAMI NH has never been stronger. Our passionate and dedicated volunteer base continues to expand our statewide reach, and our talented and hardworking staff further our mission through innovative and expanded program offerings and collaborations throughout the state."

During his tenure, Norton has received broad recognition for his work as an advocate including numerous awards such as the Wheelock-Nardi Advocacy Award from The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester in 2018, the Richard and Betsy Greer Advocacy Award from NAMI National in 2021, and the Bernard Lown Humanitarian Award from the University of Maine – Orono in 2014.

Norton was one of the first advocates in NH to sound an alarm on the practice of boarding children and adults experiencing mental health crises in emergency departments – unequivocally calling the situation a crisis: medically, legally, ethically, and morally. In 2013 he convened a press conference to highlight the issue and began what would be an 8-year campaign that culminated in an *amicus curiae* brief on behalf of NAMI NH for the Jane Doe v. Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services appeal to the NH Supreme Court earlier this year. In May, the Court issued its unanimous decision, requiring the state to provide a due process hearing within 72 hours of being detained for adults boarded in emergency departments. Reflecting on the work to improve timely access to mental health treatment, Norton stated, "I am encouraged to see so many policymakers, stakeholders, individuals, and their families come together to craft a new system of mental health crisis care in our state. As a family member and long-time New Hampshire resident, I stand ready to assist NAMI New Hampshire and its partners in any way I can as the state moves ahead with this initiative."

ABOUT NAMI New Hampshire

NAMI New Hampshire is a grassroots organization working to improve the lives of all people affected by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. Learn more at [NAMINH.org](https://www.naminh.org).