

## **Statement on Officer-Involved Shootings** *(December 14, 2021)*

Over the past few years, approximately 50% of officer-involved shootings in New Hampshire have involved individuals with known mental illness. NAMI New Hampshire (NAMI NH) has actively raised concerns and awareness about this issue, while advocating for strategies to reduce shootings. NAMI NH has convened meetings with successive New Hampshire Attorneys General and Commissioners of the NH Department of Safety, as well as with elected officials, law enforcement, and other Granite State policy leaders. NAMI NH Executive Director Kenneth Norton, LICSW also raised concerns about officer-involved shootings and use of deadly force while serving on the Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability, Community and Transparency (LEACT) following an appointment by Governor Sununu.

Multiple areas of concern exist in addition to the people injured or killed in shootings. These concerns include the impact on family and loved ones of the individuals, as well as the impact on involved law enforcement officers and their families. NAMI NH sees a clear need to promote use of less lethal force, de-escalation techniques, and training strategies to reduce future shootings. Additionally, NAMI NH advocates for an incident review process which extends beyond the current narrow definition of whether a shooting was “legally justified,” in an effort to help inform future training efforts.

Currently, NAMI NH provides 16 hours of training to all participants in the Full-Time Officer and Corrections Academies operated by New Hampshire Police Standards and Training. In September 2021, NAMI NH completed a 3-year collaboration with the NH State Police and New Hampshire Department of Safety to provide Mental Health First Aid training and the internationally recognized 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program. In October 2021, NAMI NH embarked on a 5-year grant to expand these trainings to include municipal departments and first responders. Funding for these grants was provided by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Mental Health Awareness Training Grants. Locally, the 2021 legislative session in New Hampshire yielded funding for CIT training to be offered through NH Police Standards and Training.

NAMI NH will continue working with elected officials, policymakers, and mental health advocates to bring forward 2022 legislation for continued expansion of law enforcement training and creation of a legislative study committee to make recommendations on establishing a review process for officer-involved shootings which can inform future training efforts and prevent future incidents.

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### **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).*

*Like mental illness and suicide, NAMI New Hampshire is nonpartisan. We support policies that help people with mental health conditions and their families, and collaborate with diverse stakeholders on shared goals to improve the lives of individuals affected by mental illness and suicide.*