February 15, 2022

Honorable Chairman Mark Pearson
House Health and Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee
Legislate Office Building Room 205
North Main St
Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI New Hampshire’s Opposition of HB 1077

Dear Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Holly Stevens, and I am the Director of Public Policy at NAMI New Hampshire, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI NH is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. On behalf of NAMI NH, I am here today to speak in opposition to HB 1077, repealing the prohibition on conversion therapy for minors.

One of the maxims that all health professionals should aspire to is to do no harm. The potential for harm caused by conversion therapy rises beyond shame and trauma; which can have lifelong impacts, and has the potential to be life threatening. As the chart to the right indicates, suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10-24 in NH (as well as nationally). According to the US Center for Disease Control, LGBT youth represent a significant high risk sub-group as evidenced by their rate of suicide attempts which is 4 times greater for LGB youth and 2 times greater for questioning youth, than that of straight youth. Additionally, suicide attempts by LGB youth and questioning youth are 4 to 6 times more likely to result in injury, poisoning, or overdose that requires treatment from a doctor.

Source: CDC WONDER, 2014 - 2018

NH Leading Causes of Death: 2015-2019

Reflecting on 40 Years: Continuing Our Journey to Hope, Help, and Health
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 / www.NAMINH.org
or nurse, compared to their straight peers. “Transgender and nonbinary youth were at increased risk of experiencing depressed mood, seriously considering suicide, and attempting suicide compared with cisgender lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and questioning youth.”

However, more closely related to this bill, and the potential for harm of conversion therapy, is that LGB youth who come from highly rejecting families are 8.4 times as likely to have attempted suicide as LGB peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection.

In addition, the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) released a study in 2017 showing decreased suicide rates both for LGB teens and for the teen population overall in states that have passed gay marriage.

The practice of conversion therapy in any form is a danger to the mental health and well-being of youth and young adults. Please vote HB 1077 as inexpedient to legislate. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Holly A. Stevens, Esq.

---