



February 2, 2022

Honorable Chairman Jeb Bradley
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Legislate Office Building Room 101
North Main St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support of SB 391

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 support of SB 391, relative to the operation of a state forensic psychiatric hospital.

With the building of a new state forensic psychiatric hospital (FPH), it is more than appropriate for the oversight to be within the purview of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). There is a long and complicated history of New Hampshire's Secure Psychiatric Unit (SPU), which currently houses the civilly committed individuals who would be transferred to the new state FPH, when building is completed. Notably, there was a transfer of oversight of the SPU moving from DHHS to the Department of Corrections (DOC) several decades ago.

Although individuals who will be treated at the FPH cannot be safely maintained and treated at New Hampshire Hospital, these are individuals who have not committed any crime. Therefore, DHHS rather than the DOC seems like the appropriate governmental agency to oversee and operate the facility.

NAMI NH urges the committee to vote ought to pass on SB 391. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly A. Stevens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Holly A. Stevens, Esq.