



February 16, 2023

Honorable Chair Regina Birdsell
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Legislate Office Building Room 101
North Main St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support of SB 265

Dear Chair Birdsell 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, 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 265 making an appropriation for the multi-tiered system of support for children's mental health.

The Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavioral Health (MTSS-B) is an evidenced-based prevention framework to support the behavioral health and wellness of all students. The MTSS-B framework prioritizes collaboration between schools and community mental health agencies to coordinate systems and train providers to deliver high-fidelity, evidence-based interventions on school grounds. "Tiered" refers to the fact that there are three levels of support depending on a student's needs. All students receive some support (lowest tier), students with an elevated need receive more support (middle tier), and students with the most need receive the highest level of support.

MTSS-B fits into the overall children's system of care that NAMI NH has been in support of since its inception. The results of the MTSS-B framework have been promising overall. When using MTSS-B in schools, student understanding of the subject matter improves, and problem behaviors decrease. It has been shown to improve test scores, decrease emotional distress, disruptive behavior, and substance use. The strongest positive effects come from children who are first exposed to this type of programming in kindergarten.

Current funding of the program is set to expire in the fall of 2023. SB 265 is necessary to assure that our state can continue utilizing this framework, as it includes replacement funding. NAMI NH urges the committee to vote SB 265 ought to pass so that MTSS-B can continue in NH schools.

Sincerely,

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

Holly A. Stevens, Esq.

Find Help, Find Hope.

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