

10/31/23

House Health, Human Services, and Elderly Affairs Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 205
33 N State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to Amendment 2023-2359h to HB 619

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Sam Hawkins, and I am the Public Policy Assistant at NAMI NH, 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 opposition to both Amendment 2023-2359h to HB 619, and the underlying bill itself.

NAMI NH believes that all people should be treated with respect and dignity, and should have access to mental and physical health care free from interference. As a result of stigma and discrimination, LGBTQ+ individuals, especially those who are transgender or gender-nonconforming, are often at an elevated risk for experiencing anxiety and depression. However, NAMI NH recognizes that with access to affirming healthcare and support within their homes and communities, this risk can be avoided. Gender-affirming care works. It saves lives and enhances the wellbeing of those who need it. Therefore, NAMI NH opposes harmful policies targeting LGBTQ+ individuals, such as the limit on gender-affirming care in Section 1 of this amendment.

Additionally, NAMI NH remains firm in its opposition of the harmful practice of Conversion Therapy and opposes policies that enable its use. In NAMI NH's opinion, Section 2 of this amendment would soften the statutory definition of conversion therapy, increasing the risk of this harmful practice being used against LGBTQ+ individuals when they seek mental health care.

Find Help, Find Hope.

NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301
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For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote ITL for Amendment 2023-2359h to HB619, as well as the underlying bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samuel C. Hawkins". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Samuel C. Hawkins