



January 10, 2024

Honorable Chair Regina Birdsell
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 101
33 N State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for SB 410

Dear Chair Birdsell 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 support of SB 410, establishing a mental health community and transitional housing fund.

Due to numerous factors, including the increased need for mental health services in our state, New Hampshire is experiencing a crisis in the boarding of individuals in emergency departments while waiting for inpatient psychiatric services. This crisis is a top priority for NAMI NH, and there is much work to be done in solving it, such as through the collaborative effort of NH DHHS' Mission Zero project.

One key component to addressing this crisis lies in the availability of community resources, especially housing, after a patient is ready for discharge. Every day, patients are clinically ready for discharge from New Hampshire Hospital, but are unable to leave due to a lack of appropriate housing available within the community to support their needs. This back door issue exacerbates the stress on the state's inpatient psychiatric resources and creates further wait for those boarding in emergency departments.

SB 410 would help to alleviate this crisis, and aid in providing crucial services for the needs of Granite Staters living with mental illness overall, by creating a fund for the state's community mental health programs to expand or maintain mental health community and transitional housing. Solving the crises affecting our communities means strengthening the

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resources available to them, and this bill does just that. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to recommend OTP for SB 410.

Sincerely,

Samuel C. Hawkins

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