



January 10, 2024

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

RE: NAMI NH Support for SB 457

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 favor of SB 457, relative to inpatient psychiatric services authorization and utilization review.

NAMI NH has heard from hospital personnel that insurers stop paying for inpatient psychiatric stays before the treatment team believes a person is ready for discharge. As a result, the person either has to pay out-of-pocket for the remainder of the stay, or the treatment team has to prepare the person for discharge, hopefully with enhanced outpatient services. However, due to the workforce shortage, enhanced outpatient services are rarely an option.

SB 457 would prohibit a commercial insurer from reviewing a psychiatric inpatient stay for the first 30 days, which would allow the treatment team to keep the person inpatient for as long as it felt the stay was medically necessary. It safeguards against continued unnecessary stays by requiring daily clinical review of the covered person. It also directs the commissioner of Health and Human Services to establish uniform guidelines regarding a single set of criteria for admission, continued stay, discharge determinations, and retrospective review. This will ensure that each psychiatric admission is assessed under the same guidelines regardless of the person's insurance plan.

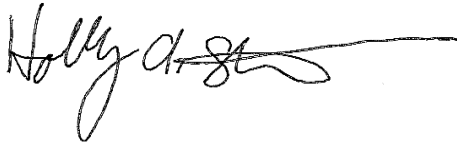
Decisions regarding the medical necessity of inpatient psychiatric treatment should be with the hospital treatment team and not with the insurer. SB 457 will assist in

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ensuring that this occurs. Therefore, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote ought to pass on SB 457.

Sincerely,

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

Holly A. Stevens, Esq.

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