



January 31, 2024

Honorable Chairman John Hunt
House Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee
Legislate Office Building Room 302-304
North State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to HB 1702

Dear Chairman Hunt 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 opposition to HB 1702, relative to oversight of liquor commission funding and repealing the liquor commission fund.

HB 1702 repeals the liquor commission fund and directs that all gross revenue derived from the sale of liquor go directly into the general fund. Currently, the funding structure of the Granite Advantage (Medicaid expansion) program allows for the use of liquor commission funds in the event that other funding sources are insufficient to fund the program. Additionally, there is a provision of law that disallows the Granite Advantage program from using any general funds. Therefore, this bill would disrupt the funding structure of Medicaid expansion, potentially putting the program's funding, and the health care of thousands of Granite Staters, at risk.

Of all the challenges facing Granite Staters, our mental health crisis is paramount. In New Hampshire, 221,000 adults have a mental health condition, and 15,000 minors ages 12-17 have depression. Despite the availability of effective treatment, over half the individuals living with a mental health condition in the US do not receive treatment. Like other medical illnesses, delays in treatment mean progression of the seriousness of the illness and more difficulty and cost when the person does eventually receive treatment. For those living with a mental illness, these delays can result in outstanding personal and productive losses that harm their livelihoods and could be life-threatening. In 2021, of the adults in New Hampshire who did not

Find Help, Find Hope.

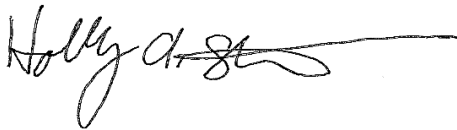
NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301
InfoLine: 800-242-6264 • Tel. 603-225-5359 • Fax 603-228-8848 • info@naminh.org / www.NAMINH.org

receive mental health care, nearly 42% did not because of cost. Increasing access to care is crucial in addressing New Hampshire's mental health crisis and reducing the human and financial cost of untreated mental illness on our state.

The positive impact Granite Advantage has in improving access to care is obvious. In 2021, through the Medicaid expansion program, over 11,000 unique individuals received mental health outpatient services; nearly 830 accessed inpatient psychiatric hospitalization; and over 26,500 obtained mental health medication. Regarding our rising rates of youth mental illness, research shows that more children are covered by insurance in states with Medicaid expansion than in those without. NAMI NH applauds the current success of Granite Advantage and the continued legislative efforts to support the program; however, HB 1702 could put all that work in jeopardy.

For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to recommend inexpedient to legislate on HB 1702.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Holly A. Stevens", with a long horizontal flourish 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