

March 26, 2024

Honorable Chairman Kenneth Weyler
House Finance Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 210-211
33 N State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Amendment #2024-1214h to HB 1633

Dear Chairman Weyler and Members of the Committee:

While NAMI NH has not taken a position on the proposed legalization of recreational cannabis, we believe that a responsible approach to legalization must avoid creating additional stress on our mental health system and be developed with a commitment to limiting the risk to the mental wellness of the public— especially youth and young adults. Research indicates that:

- People with mental illness report using marijuana at a rate of at least twice that of people without mental illness.
- There is a documented correlation between cannabis use and the onset of schizophrenia or other psychotic conditions, especially in youth and young adults.
- For young adults in particular, cannabis use can contribute to symptoms of mood disorders, anxiety, and psychosis, and may hasten the emergence of these disorders.

We must be realistic and prepare for the impact that legalization will likely have upon the mental health of Granite Staters and upon our mental health centers and hospitals. Non-germane amendment # 2024-1214h to HB 1633 creates a Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Fund; however, only 10% of revenues will be allocated to this fund, resulting in a lack of proper resources to meet the increased need legalization will likely cause. Additionally, the language of the amendment neglects to provide specific focus on mental health treatment unrelated to a co-occurring substance use disorder diagnosis, despite the independent correlation between cannabis use in teens and young adults and the onset of psychotic symptoms.

For these reasons, NAMI NH strongly urges the committee to amend the bill to provide significant funding for the prevention, treatment, and recovery of mental illness, with or without a co-occurring substance use disorder, by **increasing the allocation to the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Fund to a minimum of 20% of revenues, as well as requiring that 50% of the allocated funds be used for mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery.** Attached is NAMI NH's suggested language to address the issues referenced in our testimony.

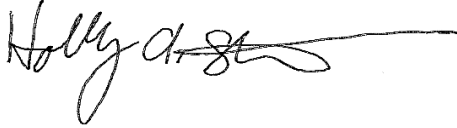
The events of the past several years have had a significant impact upon the mental health of Granite Staters, especially our youth and young adults. It is our collective responsibility to

Find Help, Find Hope.

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ensure that any approach to legalizing recreational cannabis is crafted first and foremost to ensure that prevention and treatment efforts are sufficiently funded to ameliorate the negative impacts and provide Granite Staters with the care they need when and where they need it. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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

Holly A, Stevens, Esq.

NAMI NH Suggested Amendments to Non-Germane Amendment #2024-1214h to HB 1633-FN-A

126-A:106(V)(b) (page 2, lines 14-15)

(b) Mental health treatment, with a focus on dual-diagnosis of both mental health and substance misuse disorders.

Proposed amendment:

(b) Mental health treatment; *and the prevention and recovery of mental illness.* [~~with a focus on dual-diagnosis of both mental health and substance misuse disorders.~~]

318-F:21(V)(b)(3) (page 26, lines 26-27)

(3) Ten percent shall be allocated to the substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery fund established in RSA 318-F:22;

Proposed amendment:

(3) [~~Ten~~] *Twenty* percent shall be allocated to the substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery fund established in RSA 318-F:22; *fifty percent of which shall be used for mental health prevention, treatment and recovery;*