



April 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 HB 1190

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 HB 1190, relative to adopting the interstate social work licensure compact.

Workforce shortages continue to challenge New Hampshire as a whole; however, the impact is especially grave on the state's healthcare workforce. This includes mental healthcare providers, resulting in excessive wait times for patients and increased risk of harmful burnout for dedicated professionals.

One in five adults and one in six youth aged 6-17 experience a mental illness each year in New Hampshire. As of 2021, more than half of people with a mental health condition in the U.S. did not receive any treatment. Of the 70,000 adults in New Hampshire who did not receive needed mental health care, 41.7% did not because of cost. Granite Staters are over three times more likely to be forced out of network for mental health care than primary care, which contributes to an increase on out-of-pocket costs for services. NAMI NH has heard countless stories of people who were given a list of up to 20 providers by their insurer only to discover none of them are accepting new patients.

The average delay between the onset of mental illness symptoms and treatment is 11 years. We know that when individuals with mental illness receive the right services, at the right place, at the right time, fewer folks will end up homeless, hospitalized, and/or incarcerated.

*Find Help, Find Hope.*

NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301  
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Further, for those already receiving services, continuity of care is crucial. Whether it be for students moving out of state for college, military members and their families being stationed in another state, or other forms of relocation, being able to maintain the therapeutic relationship without unnecessary gaps in treatment is essential to an individual's recovery.

HB 1190 would adopt the Social Work Licensure Compact which would allow social workers from other compact states to practice in New Hampshire, and for existing New Hampshire providers to offer services to patients in other states. This bill would help to address the mental health workforce shortage in our state, expand access to care for Granite Staters in need, and enable continuity of care for existing patients.

For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to recommend OTP for HB 1190.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel C. Hawkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

Samuel C. Hawkins