

April 25, 2024

Honorable Chair Sharon Carson
Senate Judiciary Committee
State House Room 100
107 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH testimony on HB 1633

Dear Chair Carson and Members of the Committee:

While NAMI NH does not have 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 high-potency 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. It is likely that, as a result of the legalization of cannabis, there will be an increase in the need for mental health treatment and that individuals who experience a first episode of psychosis will likely end up in an emergency room seeking care. HB 1633 as introduced contained language specifying how the revenues collected by the state would be used. The bill as it came over from the House eliminated this language. To minimize harms due to the legalization of cannabis, 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

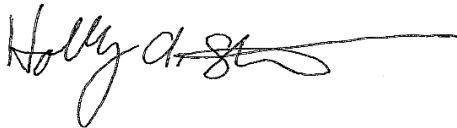
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use disorder, by **allocating a minimum of 20% of revenues for mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery.**

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 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.

Sincerely,

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

Holly A, Stevens, Esq.