



April 23, 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 Support of SB 561

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 support of SB 561 relative to prior authorizations.

SB 561 establishes criteria for prior authorizations for insurers governed under New Hampshire's Managed Care law. Given the current variability of the way prior authorizations are used, this is a welcomed change. In mental health care, prior authorizations are most often used with medications, higher levels of care, and newer treatment procedures such as transcranial magnetic stimulation and ketamine assisted therapy.

The application of prior authorizations by insurers can have a detrimental effect on the health and well being of their members, and can disproportionately affect those seeking mental health care. According to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation Survey "26% of people who sought treatment for or took prescription medication for a mental health condition in the past year (e.g., depression, anxiety) experienced prior authorization problems in the past year, compared to 13% of insured adults who did not seek mental health treatment." Additionally, people whose insurance issues included prior authorizations were about "3 times more likely to report being unable to receive medical care or treatment recommended by a medical provider as a direct result of their health insurance problems compared to those whose problems did not include prior authorizations." Further, people whose insurance issues included prior authorizations were twice as likely to report that their health declined as a direct result

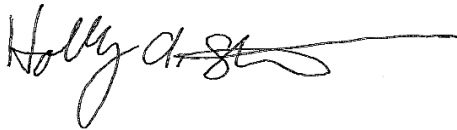
Find Help, Find Hope.

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

of the prior authorization issue, and that they had to pay more out of pocket for their medical care.¹

The changes SB 561 will make to the way insurers use prior authorizations should help those seeking mental health treatment get the services that they need leading to better health outcomes. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee recommend ought to pass on SB 561.

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.

¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, Consumer Problems with Prior Authorization: Evidence from KFF Survey; Karen Pollitz, Kaye Pestaina, Lunna Lopes, Rayna Wallace, and Justin Lo; September 29, 2023.

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