

January 30, 2025

Honorable Chair Diane Pauer
House Municipal and County Government Committee
Legislative Office Building Rooms 301-303
1N State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for HB 432

Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. 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 writing in support of HB 432, relative to recovery houses.

The ongoing housing crisis is one of the greatest challenges currently facing the Granite State, and no one is immune to its effects. This crisis has deep impacts on our communities, our workforce, and especially on individuals with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Stable housing is a crucial component of recovery for individuals with a mental illness and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. Without access to stable housing appropriate to meet their needs, it becomes harder for an individual to maintain their mental health and wellness and progress in their recovery.

The state must take a wholistic approach to ensuring that there is a wide variety of housing options available to support those with a mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use disorder. Recovery houses, which are substance-free living environments that often provide peer support and connections to services, are one crucial form of housing to promote people's recovery while remaining integrated in their community.

HB 432 takes an important step in encouraging the development of recovery housing by clarifying the definition, regulations, and zoning of recovery houses. This clarification will

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serve to clear up confusions and concerns for communities that have resulted in a lack of development and severe shortage of recovery housing.

Addressing the housing crisis and its vast and varied impacts on the residents of New Hampshire will require a nuanced, multifaceted approach, and HB 432 is one important part of that effort. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote Ought to Pass for HB 432.

Sincerely,

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

Samuel C. Hawkins