



January 28, 2025

Honorable Chairman James Gray
Senate Finance Committee
State House Room 103
107 N Main St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for SB 113

Chairman Gray 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 SB 113, making appropriations to the department of health and human services for homeless services and homeless prevention.

People with mental illness are overrepresented in the unhoused population, as about 1 in 5 people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. have a serious mental health condition. Homelessness and housing instability have a profoundly negative impact on mental health. As a critical social determinant of health, stable housing is a crucial element of recovery for individuals living with a mental illness. Housing instability can contribute to stress, anxiety, and other mental health symptoms. At the same time, the symptoms of a serious mental health condition can make finding and maintaining housing more challenging.

A wide variety of programs and services are required to prevent homelessness and support those individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Without access to proper supports and services, individuals experiencing homelessness, including those living with a mental health condition, will likely see their health, including their mental health, worsen, and may find themselves hospitalized or incarcerated, leading to further negative outcomes and a financial burden on the state that may be avoided by properly investing in community resources and services.

Find Help, Find Hope.

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SB 113 provides crucial funding for services to support individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as funding for services to provide stable housing and prevent homelessness. These resources are critical to supporting the mental health of the thousands of Granite Staters experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote Ought to Pass for SB 113.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samuel C. Hawkins". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Samuel C. Hawkins