



January 28, 2025

Honorable Chairman James Gray
Senate Finance Committee
State House Room 103
107 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for SB 114

Dear 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 114, making appropriations to the department of health and human services to support community and transitional housing through community mental health centers.

As a result of the ongoing increased need for mental health services in our state, New Hampshire is experiencing a crisis in the boarding of individuals in emergency departments. Just yesterday, 19 adults were waiting in an ED while waiting for inpatient psychiatric care. This crisis is a top priority of NAMI NH, and there is much work to be done in solving it, such as through the collaborative effort of NH DHHS' Mission Zero project.

One key component to addressing this crisis lies in the availability of community resources, especially housing, after a patient is ready for discharge. Every day, patients are clinically ready for discharge from New Hampshire Hospital, but are unable to leave due to a lack of housing and other resources available within the community to support their needs. This back door issue exacerbates the stress on the state's inpatient psychiatric resources and creates further wait for those boarding in emergency departments.


SB 114 would help to alleviate this crisis, and further address the needs of Granite Staters living with mental illness, by providing funding for the state's community mental health

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centers to expand or maintain mental health community and transitional housing. Solving the crises affecting our communities means strengthening the resources available to them, and this bill does just that. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to recommend ought to pass for SB 114.

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