



February 5, 2025

Honorable Chairman John Hunt
House Commerce and Consumer Affairs
Legislate Office Building Room 302-304
77 North State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for HB 507

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 favor of HB 507, relative to the timeline for credentialing of mental health care providers.

Workforce shortages continue to challenge New Hampshire as a whole; however, the impact is especially grave on the state's healthcare workforce. This includes mental healthcare providers, who struggle to attract and retain critically needed staff, resulting in excessive wait times for patients and increased risk of harmful burnout for dedicated professionals.

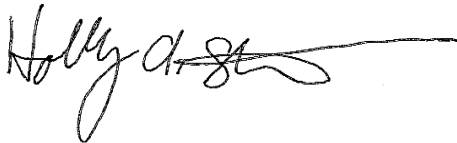
One in five adults and one in five youth aged 6-17 experience a mental illness each year in New Hampshire. More than half of people with a mental health condition in the U.S. did not receive any treatment in 2021. Of the 70,000 adults in New Hampshire who did not receive needed mental health care, 41.7% did not because of cost. Granite Staters are over three times more likely to be forced out of network for mental health care than primary care, which contributes to an increase on out-of-pocket costs for services. In 2021, nearly 40% of adults in New Hampshire reported symptoms of anxiety or depression and 17% of them were unable to get needed counseling or therapy. Due to the workforce shortage, many mental health providers have opted not to engage with commercial insurers because they have enough cash-paying patients to sustain their practice. This has led to individuals not being able to find providers covered by their insurance plans, which leads to an increased cost for services. NAMI NH has heard countless stories of people who were given a list of up to 20 providers by their insurer only to discover none of them are accepting new patients. The length of time it takes to get credentialed with the insurers is yet another deterrent for providers to engage with insurance plans, which has only exacerbated the difficulty in accessing mental health services.

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

When individuals with mental illness receive the right services, at the right place, at the right time, fewer folks will end up homeless, hospitalized, and/or incarcerated, all of which cost the state far more than providing community-based services. HB 507 will likely increase the number of providers who engage with commercial insurance, thus reducing the issues of access. Therefore, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote ought to pass on HB 507.

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.

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