



March 4, 2025

Honorable Chair Ruth Ward  
Senate Education Committee  
Legislative Office Building Room 101  
33 North State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH testimony on SB 96

Dear Chair Ward 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 on SB 96, relative to mandatory disclosure by school district employees to parents.

NAMI NH recognizes the fundamental importance of the parent-child relationship in a person's development and the impact it has on their lifelong mental health and opportunities. Parents not only have the right to direct the upbringing and care of their children, but also the responsibility to do so: to provide the supports and resources they need to become healthy, thriving adults. With this in mind, NAMI NH is not taking a position on SB 96 as introduced, however we wanted to share the following concerns.

In New Hampshire, 15,000 youth ages 12-17 have depression. One in five youth aged 6-17 experience a mental illness each year in New Hampshire, a marked recent increase from the previous statistic of one in six. Further, every day, youth are boarding in emergency departments while waiting for inpatient care. It is with these statistics in mind that NAMI NH offers the following comments.

As an organization, we agree that family relationships are the most impactful within a child's life. But we know that these are not the only relationships that children have, and that it takes a full community of support to ensure their health, wellness, safety, and opportunity. Therefore, NAMI NH has some concerns relating to the "completely and honestly" language in the bill. While we do not believe it is

*Find Help, Find Hope.*

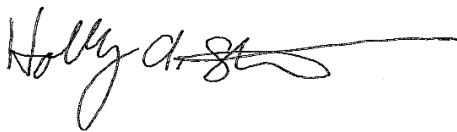
NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301  
InfoLine: 800-242-6264 • Tel. 603-225-5359 • Fax 603-228-8848 • [info@naminh.org](mailto:info@naminh.org) / [www.NAMINH.org](http://www.NAMINH.org)

appropriate for an educator to withhold or provide misinformation, we are concerned that this language may have a chilling effect on educator/student relationships.

Some children will approach other community members, including educators, with their questions, concerns, or feelings before opening up to their parents. This is not because that relationship is more important than the relationship with the parent, but because it is a lower-stakes relationship and opportunity for them to explore their options. It is crucial that educators are open to having these crucial conversations with students when the student feels they need to happen. We have concerns that the words “completely and honestly” may be broadly interpreted, not necessarily by the courts, but by educators themselves to mean they must take detailed notes on every conversation they have with a student in case they later receive a request from a parent pertaining to that conversation. This may result in teachers not being there for students when they need them. These conversations are a crucial stepping-stone to building a child’s confidence so that they may go to their parents with the issue – and without them, many children may go on struggling in silence.

While considering SB 96, NAMI NH asks, should the committee advance such a policy or similar policies, that there consideration of the aforementioned concerns to ensure that children and families have the support they need for their health, wellness, and safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly A. Stevens". The signature is written in a cursive style 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](mailto:info@naminh.org) / [www.NAMINH.org](http://www.NAMINH.org)