

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Kenneth Weyler, Chairman  
House Finance Committee  
One Granite Place, Room 230  
Concord, NH 03301

Good morning, Chairman Weyler and Members of the Committee,

NAMI New Hampshire is a grassroots organization working to improve the lives of all people affected by mental illness and suicide through support, education, and advocacy. As an organization, NAMI NH has nearly 45 years of experience advocating for Granite Staters who are impacted by mental illness, giving us a longitudinal perspective of NH's mental health system. It is with this perspective that NAMI NH supports HB 1569, repealing the directive that the state sell the Anna Philbrook Center for Children (APC) property in Concord.

In 2010, the APC (then a 24-bed acute psychiatric facility for children<sup>1</sup>) was in need of renovations to improve its residential wings, built in 1969. Those necessary renovations were determined to be too costly in the wake of the 2008 recession, and the building was closed with the children being moved into NH Hospital<sup>2</sup> – the state's acute psychiatric facility for adults. As children could only be in single bed rooms, creating 24 beds for kids at NH Hospital (NHH) resulted in a loss of 48 adult beds.<sup>3</sup> (In 2012-2013, the State would spend \$3.1M renovating Philbrook to be used as State offices.<sup>4</sup>)

Throughout the mid and late 2000s, legislative cuts and inadequate reimbursement rates led to a 40% reduction in NH's inpatient bed capacity for both adults and children.<sup>5</sup> The decision to move the children to NHH was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. By 2012, emergency department (ED) boarding had come to New Hampshire<sup>6</sup> – meaning that individuals experiencing acute psychiatric crisis would wait in emergency departments across the state, for days or even weeks, usually in isolation, under guard, and with little or no treatment. The issue of ED boarding has persisted ever since. The chart below illustrates the progression of ED

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/2020-04/annaph\\_0708.pdf](https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/2020-04/annaph_0708.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> (<https://www.concordnh.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/762>)

<sup>3</sup> <https://gnmhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Mental-health-remains-a-challenge-for-NH.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.das.nh.gov/budget/Budget2012-2013/Executive%20Summary%20Final.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://naminh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/10-Year-Plan-Addressing-the-Critical-Mental-Health-Needs-of-NH-](https://naminh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/10-Year-Plan-Addressing-the-Critical-Mental-Health-Needs-of-NH-Citizens.pdf#:~:text=Three%20psychiatric%20units%20recently%20closed:%20the%20psychiatric,providers%20have%20focused%20on%20independent%20living%20programs)

[Citizens.pdf#:~:text=Three%20psychiatric%20units%20recently%20closed:%20the%20psychiatric,providers%20have%20focused%20on%20independent%20living%20programs](https://naminh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/10-Year-Plan-Addressing-the-Critical-Mental-Health-Needs-of-NH-Citizens.pdf#:~:text=Three%20psychiatric%20units%20recently%20closed:%20the%20psychiatric,providers%20have%20focused%20on%20independent%20living%20programs)

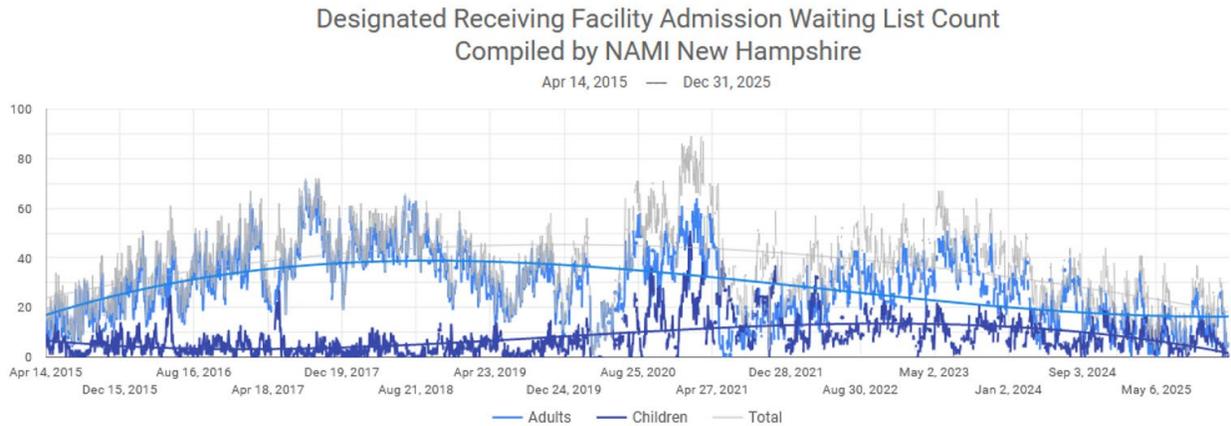
<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nhpr.org/nh-news/2021-05-11/n-h-court-rules-er-boarding-of-people-with-mental-health-crises-violates-law>

*Find Help, Find Hope.*

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boarding in NH over the past decade.<sup>7</sup> The light blue line represents adults, and the dark blue line children.



Both the re-establishment of a children’s hospital and the Philbrook building have played key roles in the State’s efforts to end ED boarding and ensure Granite Staters who require that level of care can receive it in a timely manner. With the transition of the children to the more appropriate setting at Hampstead Hospital in 2019, NHH has subsequently been able to operate at its full 185 bed capacity. In 2020, Philbrook was once again renovated and reopened as a 16-bed transitional housing program for adults being discharged from NHH.<sup>8</sup> Initially operated by NHH, in 2024 NFI North took over operations<sup>9</sup> with a regular census of 16 adult participants.

Throughout the years, there have been several attempts to address the issue of ED boarding, but the most successful to date has been the current collaborative Mission Zero<sup>10</sup> initiative led by the NH Department of Health & Human Services. Through the Mission Zero initiative, we have seen significant progress in reducing ED boarding. Indeed, in 2025 there were 8 days where there were zero adults subject to an involuntary emergency admission (IEA) waiting in EDs. For context, between 2017 and 2024 there were 8 days *in total* where the number of adults boarding was zero. In addition, wait times have reduced significantly from nearly 4 days in 2022 to 2 days at the end of 2025.

In addition to making real progress, by working collaboratively, the partners have been able to drill down and look at the levers driving the problem of ED boarding. That data has demonstrated that the issue is not an insufficient number of acute psychiatric inpatient beds. It is the need for community-based services, including crisis response, and the need for appropriate disposition/housing for people with mental illness who are stable and ready for discharge.

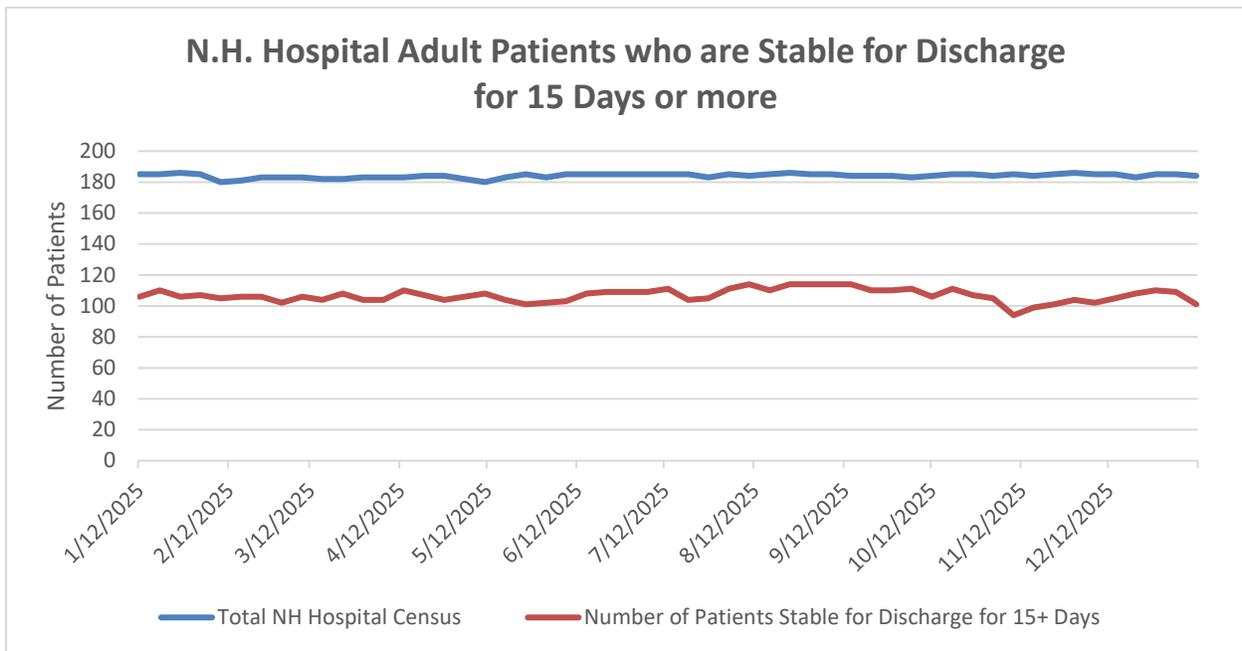
NHH has a total capacity of 185 beds. On any given day, slightly more than half of those beds are filled by individuals who have been clinically stable and ready for discharge for 15 days or longer, but have no appropriate setting to be discharged to – at a cost to the State of \$1,599/day.

<sup>7</sup> Live Dashboard: <https://bit.ly/2Vpvl2>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.naminh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/PATH-announcement.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://media.sos.nh.gov/govcouncil/2023/1220/032B%20GC%20Agenda%20122023.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/mental-health/mission-zero>



While the Pathways transitional housing program currently at Philbrook has found a new 16-bed home in Newport, unfortunately, the new facility is part of the current inventory of community residence and transitional housing beds in the State. For our mental health system, this will result in a net loss of 16 beds – this is in addition to the closure of 10 beds in the capital region due to insufficient funding in 2025.

One in five adult Granite Staters experiences a mental illness in any given year. We all know someone and often it is someone whom we dearly love. At NAMI New Hampshire, we understand the financial constraints the State is facing. We also recognize that once gone, beds for people with mental illness – peer respite, acute inpatient, step-up/step-down, transitional, permanent supported, and community residence beds – take years to develop and open. In the interim, more people go to emergency departments, become homeless, wind up being incarcerated, or suffer even more tragic outcomes. And their families suffer great anguish.

Dismantling a system is relatively easy, rebuilding it, as we have learned all too well in our State is much harder and much more costly. For this reason and on behalf of the 100 people waiting for discharge from NH Hospital with no place to go, NAMI NH asks that you recommend Ought to Pass for HB 1569.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Stearns  
Executive Director