



March 18, 2026

Honorable Chair Erica Layon
House Executive Departments & Administration
Granite Place Room 231
1 Granite Pl, Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to SB 572

Chair Layon and Committee Members:

On behalf of NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, I write in opposition to SB 572, relative to New Hampshire hospital real estate.

As members of the committee are likely aware, the 2026-2027 NH State Budget included a requirement that the state sell the Anna Philbrook Center (APC) following the development of a transition plan for the 16-bed transitional housing program currently operating in the building. As way of background, the APC previously served as a 24-bed acute psychiatric facility for children prior to its closure due to a need for overly costly renovations. As a result, the children being treated at the APC at that time were moved into NH Hospital – 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.

At the same time, several converging factors led to a significant reduction in NH’s inpatient bed capacity for both adults and children, and by 2012, emergency department (ED) boarding had come to New Hampshire, and the issue of ED boarding has persisted ever since.

Throughout the years, there have been several attempts to address ED boarding, but the most successful to date has been the current collaborative Mission Zero initiative. Through this initiative, we have seen significant progress in reducing ED boarding. 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 that number was zero.

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. In 2019, inpatient treatment for children was transitioned from NHH to Hampstead Hospital, and NHH has subsequently been able to operate at its full 185

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bed capacity. In 2020, Philbrook was once again renovated and reopened as a 16-bed transitional housing program for adults being discharged from NHH.

However, we must not move backwards. 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 ~\$1,600/day. While the program currently operating at the APC has found a new 16-bed home in Newport, the new facility is part of the current inventory of community residence and transitional housing beds in the State, resulting in a net loss of beds for the system.

Assuming 16 individuals would be unable to discharge due to this loss of beds, for 1 day, this would cost the state \$25,600. For 30 days that number jumps to \$768,000. In just 7 months, that number climbs to \$5, 376,000. As such, there is a strategic benefit for the state to maintain ownership of the APC to provide flexibility for the system, should community need increase or should the state decide to stand up additional community-based resources and programs.

This position has already broadly been affirmed by the House this session. HB 1569, a bill that would repeal the prospective sale of the APC, received a unanimous Ought to Pass recommendation from the House Finance Committee, with Chairman Weyler drafting the majority report, and passed the full House just last week on a voice vote. Passing SB 572 would undo what the House just did.

Dismantling a system is relatively easy, rebuilding it, as we have learned all too well, 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 maintain the House position of repealing the sale of the APC and recommend SB 572 Inexpedient to Legislate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam Hawkins".

Sam Hawkins