



April 16, 2026

Honorable Chairman John Hunt
House Commerce & Consumer Affairs
Granite Place Room 229
1 Granite Pl, Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for SB 646

Chairman Hunt and Committee Members:

On behalf of NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, I write in support of SB 646, relative to mental health standards of care.

Untreated mental illnesses can have grave impacts on a person and their loved ones, potentially leading to great losses in wellness, productivity, opportunity, and even the tragic loss of life. However, we know that with access to the right treatment, at the right time, in the right place, individuals living with mental health conditions can recover, manage ongoing symptoms, and lead happy, fulfilling lives within their community.

The symptoms of a mental illness can manifest differently in every person and impact their lives in different ways. Similarly, each person may have unique needs for supports and services to best help them eliminate barriers to their recovery – even for those with the same diagnosis or similar symptoms. In many instances the supports a person needs may not be considered a clinical service in a traditional sense, such as case management and other functional supports. However, they are undeniably medical necessities to ensure the person’s successful recovery from a mental health condition and to avoid the return of symptoms in the future and costly outcomes for the individual and system. New Hampshire has seen firsthand the benefits of functional supports in behavioral health treatment, helping to connect individuals with the services they need to get well, stay well, and thrive, and avoiding tragic outcomes such as homelessness, hospitalization, incarceration, or even death.

Unfortunately, despite the overall outcome and cost benefits to the system, these medically necessary supports are not traditionally covered by commercial insurance plans – which too often leaves the state and the community providers to foot the bill. This dynamic results in people not seeking supports, as they think they cannot receive them without coverage, and places an unsustainable cost burden on the state’s safety net that threatens to destabilize our mental health system.

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

The urgency of this issue becomes increasingly clear when considering the impact on individuals discharging from New Hampshire Hospital (NHH) and the ongoing emergency department (ED) boarding crisis. A key goal of functional support services is to prevent readmissions to the hospital. In fact, in many cases, when a person is conditionally discharged from New Hampshire Hospital, they are mandated to accept and work with functional support services. If a person refuses to engage with these services, their conditional discharge can be revoked leading to rehospitalization. Without commercial coverage of these services, we may face a situation where a commercially insured person on a conditional discharge is returned to the hospital simply because they can't afford to pay out of pocket for functional support services and our safety net can't close the gap.

SB 646 takes a simple approach to addressing this coverage disparity by requiring alignment with Medicaid coverage standards, which would include the functional supports we know for a fact are effective in enabling recovery from a mental illness, and are truly medically necessary.

Mental health treatment works. Proper treatment can not only make recovery possible, but also functional, sustainable, and affordable. However, this can only be achieved if people can access the right services, at the right time, in the right place. Lack of commercial coverage of these supports challenges our ability to connect people to this care and may contribute to the ongoing mental health crisis and financial instability for community providers. SB 646 is a strong first step in closing the coverage gap, and NAMI NH strongly urges the committee to support the bill.

Sincerely,

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

Sam Hawkins