



April 8, 2026

Honorable Chairman Terry Roy  
House Criminal Justice and Public Safety  
Granite Place Room 229  
1 Granite Place, Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH opposition to SB 667

Dear Chair Roy and Members of the Committee:

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 opposition to SB 667, relative to the assault of emergency room personnel.

NAMI NH greatly appreciates the critical services that emergency room personnel provide and believes that they are an important element of mental health crisis response, especially in times when a person ends up boarding in an emergency room while awaiting psychiatric care. Further, we recognize and understand the risk of harm that these staff face on a daily basis and the need to protect their safety and wellbeing. However, we have significant concerns that SB 667 will significantly and punitively impact individuals in mental health crisis without meaningfully improving the safety of hospital staff.

SB 667 contains no mechanism for protecting the safety of medical personnel. Under current law, law enforcement officers already have the ability to arrest a person without a warrant for misdemeanor level offenses in an emergency room because of a change in the law a couple of years ago. This language, signed into law from SB 58 in 2023, was worked on extensively by stakeholders, including hospitals, health care workers, legislators, and advocates.

However, it is currently unclear if this policy is currently being implemented and how the implementation has affected safety in EDs. Data assessing the impact of this change in law has not yet been made available. Though healthcare workforce violence overall continues to be an urgent issue, it is unclear if the policy in SB 58 (and now SB 667) is effective in reducing it. Considering that the police can already remove someone for a misdemeanor assault or threat, SB 667 provides no further protection in the emergency rooms than the

*Find Help, Find Hope.*

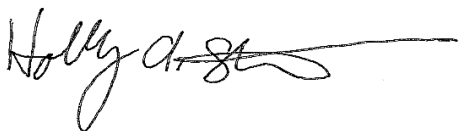
NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301  
InfoLine: 800-242-6264 • Tel. 603-225-5359 • Fax 603-228-8848 • [info@naminh.org](mailto:info@naminh.org) / [www.NAMINH.org](http://www.NAMINH.org)

existing law already does. Until it is known whether this change is effective, it does not make sense to pass another law trying to address the same issue by expanding the same policy. With all of this in mind, SB 667 does not improve the safety of ED staff, rather exclusively increases penalties and charges. These increased charges do not act as a deterrent, as the average Granite Stater is unlikely to understand the differences between the consequences for misdemeanor and felony charges, if they were to be aware of this change in law at all. This is especially true for individuals in mental health crisis who are in emergency departments. Though these people may lash out in aggression, they are unlikely to fully understand the consequences of such action. As such, we are gravely concerned that this bill would only serve to worsen health outcomes for people in mental health crisis without enhancing staff safety.

SB 667 could also have an unintended chilling effect on help-seeking by discouraging people in crisis or their loved ones from going to an emergency room when it is medically necessary for fear of their stay resulting in a felony. This could result in further decompensation in the community, thus increasing the risk for tragic outcomes for all involved.

If SB 667 passes, we expect that more people in a mental health crisis will face higher level charges and languish in county jails, which would only serve to exacerbate the crisis they are experiencing. For these reasons, NAMI NH encourages the committee to recommend inexpedient to legislate for SB 667.

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.