

POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

LD 1866 An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the State-designated Agency Advocating for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness

As the state's largest grassroots mental health advocacy organization, NAMI Maine supports the passage of *LD 1866, An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the State-designated Agency Advocating to Individuals with Serious Mental Illness*. Maine has recently entered into a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice regarding the over-institutionalization of our young people, particularly those with complex behavioral health needs. This was not the first time Maine faced a lawsuit and settlement agreement regarding over-institutionalization and lack of services across the state for young people and adults.

The Americans with Disabilities Act has profoundly impacted the quality of life for individuals across Maine and the country. It has provided education, employment, and treatment opportunities. This has enriched the lives of individuals, particularly those with serious mental illness, as it has moved forward with the de-institutionalization of individuals. Advocacy is a key component in ensuring that individuals are receiving the appropriate services and resources. It is critical that the state continue to ensure that individuals with disabilities continue to have advocacy within the state.

As the state works to move forward to support individuals on their journeys to wellness, their voices are often lost, and there are minimal individuals advocating for them. Those involved in our complex systems deserve individuals advocating for their individual and systemic needs, whose only focus is ensuring that they are receiving the best possible care and working to provide resources that divert them from becoming entrenched in the systems for extended periods. Because of this, NAMI Maine supports the passage of LD 1866.

ABOUT NAMI MAINE: Incorporated in 1984, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maine Chapter (NAMI Maine) is the state's largest grassroots mental health organization. With support from national and regional affiliates, the agency is dedicated to building better lives for everyone impacted by behavioral health concerns. NAMI Maine engages with leaders and community partners at all levels to improve the state's mental health system through collaboration and education.

LEGISLATIVE CONTACT

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POSITIONS & POLICY AGENDA

www.namimaine.org/advocacy