

POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

LD 291 An Act to Support Young People Affected by Substance Use Disorder

Presented to Maine's Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

As the state's largest grassroots mental health advocacy organization, NAMI Maine supports the passage of *An Act to Support Young People Affected by Substance Use Disorder*. NAMI Maine and other mental health advocates have attended multiple hearings and work sessions before this committee's esteemed colleagues sitting on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee regarding very similar issues and concerns. Although we recognize that this is a concept draft, we strongly support any and all work that is being proposed in Health and Human Services, as it shifts the ownership and support for the young people of our state back to the correct system.

According to the most updated facts sheet released by the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services website, 1 in 4 high school students in the state have been offered, given, or sold illegal substances on school property. It was also reported on the website that according to the most recent Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 22% of high schoolers and 4% of middle schoolers had used marijuana in the previous 30 days. The same survey revealed that 23% of high schoolers also consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days, with 33% of those who responded saying that they had drunk, also reporting consuming 5 or more drinks in a row which constitutes binge drinking. Distressingly, 3% of middle schoolers reported taking a prescription medication that was not prescribed to them. Lastly, 4% of the young people who participated in the survey reported that they required substance use treatment, and they did not receive it. Using a medium sized high school size in the state for context, which would be 600-700 students, there are 27-28 students that currently require substance use treatment and are not receiving it. Please consider making a calculation for the high school students in your districts to continue to consider the staggering number of young people in each community requiring care and not receiving it.

NAMI Maine supports the work and initiatives of this committee in ensuring that the investments of this committee will provide critical resources and allow for the best possible outcomes for our children. Maine has struggled with the weight of substance use disorders for a considerable amount of time. Investing in treatment for young people will assist in the long-term health and well-being of our state.

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
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