

## POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

### **LD 1229, An Act to Support Peer Mentors for Parents Involved in the Child Protective Services System**

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

As the state's largest grassroots mental health advocacy organization, NAMI Maine strongly supports the passage of *An Act to Support Peer Mentors for Parents Involved in the Child Protective Services System*. Peer support and recovery coaching has emerged as a best practice for the support and recovery efforts in many different areas. Peer mentorship has been used within the child protective system since the early 2000's, resulting in many positive outcomes.

There are various models of peer mentoring within child protective systems, with initiatives to support the recovery of the parents demonstrating positive outcomes for the both the child being placed within the system, and the parents working to care for them. Impacts of this model have included parental attitudes and beliefs, coping skills, and increased parental confidence. It has also been found to decrease parental stress levels and results in a higher level of connection with providers. Some studies have demonstrated an increase of 64.3% of reunification within 12-24 months in some programs that have been implemented in other parts of the country. These programs have been found to be effective in reunifying faster, navigating trauma and the emotional impacts of their case, and building a support network and connections in their communities. Peer recovery coaching has also been found to be effective for 43-48% of those who engage in services, compared to the 33% of those without peer recovery coaching. This program will assist in the immediate system concerns and needs in order to allow for reunification, as well as developing lasting support and connections for the family as a whole once the child has returned to their parents' care.

NAMI Maine appreciates that the State of Maine is in a difficult fiscal position during these times and is looking to prioritize funding. However, investment in this high-risk population to ensure they are able to receive evidence-based supportive treatment will reduce the long-term financial impacts on the state. As you work to address the substance use crisis impacting our state currently, this is a pro-active measure to attempt to curb the rising tide of the lasting impacts. This is a cost saving measure- both financially as well as in the lives it can impact and save.

*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.*

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