

POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

LD 1360, An Act Requiring Training Regarding and Screening for Adverse Childhood Experiences

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 Requiring Training Regarding and Screening for Adverse Childhood Experiences*.

When the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Studies were initially released in 1998, it was found that childhood abuse, household dysfunction, and neglect were identified as significant risk factors in many chronic medical conditions and premature death in adulthood. The impact of childhood trauma has been significantly studied since the ACEs research was initially released and it has been found that by providing trauma-informed, resiliency-based interventions and supports, the lasting impacts of these experiences is decreased. Under the guidance of their state's surgeon general, California's legislature has initiated policy allowing trainings and guidance surrounding the implementation of ACEs screening within medical offices, including the ability for providers to bill for the time it takes to thoughtfully discuss such impactful subjects.

Additionally, resiliency screenings have been developed in order to better understand the factors that contribute to recovery and enhancement of treatment. These include adults in an individual's life who cared about them, who were interested in their activities, and who they could trust. The resiliency scores can be helpful in identifying areas in which adults in a young person's life can target and support growth. We are proud to know there are police departments in Maine who take the time to learn both ACEs and resiliency scores of the young people they interact with, and by promoting aspects of resiliency, they have seen more positive outcomes in their lives. Because of this, although it is helpful for adults and their providers to understand the impacts of childhood trauma in order to address health concerns, it is also imperative to intervene as early as possible.

California is leading the way in the development of many policies and guidelines that will allow for guidance in the implementation of processes and procedures for things such as mandated reporting and utilization of information. Our local law enforcement is also leading us in the utilization of proactively identifying resiliency factors and increasing them. We urge this committee to also look at these policies and vote ought to pass in order to ensure that we are identifying and addressing lasting physical and behavioral health impacts.

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

Hannah Longley, LCSW, Director of Community Programs
(207) 622-5767 ○ HannahL@namimaine.org

POSITIONS & POLICY AGENDA

www.namimaine.org/advocacy