

POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT**LD 1426: Resolve to Expand Child Assertive Community Treatment**
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 *Resolve to Expand Child Assertive Community Treatment*. NAMI Maine speaks to countless family members and individuals living with or experiencing significant Mental Illness each year, navigating the mental health maze and seeking treatment and support services to maintain stability in the community.

While 1 in 40 Americans will experience a severe and persistent mental illness across their lifetime, less than half will receive adequate and effective intervention before their illness progresses to the point of meeting the criteria for a disability. Sadly, 20% of young people who develop a severe and persistent mental illness receive their first formal intervention during an encounter with law enforcement.¹ Research over the years has consistently demonstrated that providing early interventions in an evidence-based manner reduces the risk of long-term adverse impacts and promotes a more favorable prognosis. There are indications that youth ACT is effective in reducing the severity of psychiatric symptoms, improving general functioning, and reducing the duration and frequency of psychiatric hospital admissions.² Youth ACT teams provide support, resources, and education for the entire family unit. Although the youth ACT team provides intensive treatment, it is delivered by a multidisciplinary team, including the family, resulting in increased engagement and collaborative support for the young person. Additionally, youth ACT expansion was outlined in the recent settlement with the Department of Justice as it relates to the young people of our state facing institutionalization and the inability to remain in their communities. By expanding the service to additional parts of the state, we are working to provide equity to additional communities.

NAMI Maine acknowledges that the State of Maine is facing a challenging fiscal position during these times. However, youth ACT services have demonstrated that they save money spent on more restrictive treatment and support successful community integration of young people living with significant mental health challenges.

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.*

¹ CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH - 2022 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report - NCBI Bookshelf

² The effect of youth assertive community treatment: a systematic PRISMA review - PMC

LEGISLATIVE CONTACT

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POSITIONS & POLICY AGENDA
www.namimaine.org/advocacy