

**POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT****LD 721: Resolve, to Support the Full Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in the State**

As the state's largest grassroots mental health advocacy organization, NAMI Maine supports the passage of LD 721: *Resolve, to Support Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic in the State*. NAMI Maine represents the 1 in 4 Mainers who struggle with mental health challenges each year. Mental Illness is a complex journey, with individuals waiting an average of 11 years from the onset of symptoms until they seek treatment.

According to the World Health Organization, suffering from a serious mental illness has been found to reduce life expectancy anywhere from 13 to 32 years, depending on location and access to services. In most Western countries, WHO states that mental illness is the leading cause of disability, as well as accounting for 30-40% of sick days. Currently, suicide is the second leading cause of death for 10-24-year-olds, and it is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death across all ages. The most recent data released by the State of Maine was from 2022, with the number of suicide deaths at 277, meaning we lose a Mainer to suicide on average every 31.5 hours.

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, or CCBHCs, provide much-needed care within the communities and have been found to reduce burdens and use of higher levels of care, such as hospitalizations and incarcerations. The nine required components of CCBHCs include 24/7 mobile crisis teams and crisis stabilization, Screening, assessment, and diagnosis, Patient-centered treatment planning, Outpatient mental health and substance use services, Primary care screening and monitoring of key health indicators, Targeted case management, Psychiatric rehabilitation services, Peer and family support, and lastly tailored mental health care for members of the armed forces and veterans. Additionally, CCBHCs must adhere to set criteria regarding the timeliness of access, care coordination, quality reporting, staffing, and scope of services. Because of this, CCBHCs have been found to increase access to behavioral health services and needed resources across all ages, particularly high-risk populations.

We have been informed that Maine is facing significant budget challenges. With this in mind, NAMI Maine will advocate for continued access to life-changing and life-saving behavioral health programming. The nearly 500 Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in 46 states have demonstrated that this is a cost-effective and best-practice program to invest in due to diversion from higher and more costly levels of care. Because of this, NAMI Maine strongly urges the passage of LD 63, An Act to Support Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Projects.

**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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**LEGISLATIVE CONTACT**

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**POSITIONS & POLICY AGENDA**  
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