

POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

LD 1239 An Act to Require Data Collection on and Reporting of Psychiatric Hospital Resources and Transparency in Denials of Emergency Involuntary Admissions to Psychiatric Hospitals

As the state's largest grassroots mental health advocacy organization, NAMI Maine supports the passage of LD 1239, *An Act to Require Data Collection on and Reporting of Psychiatric Hospital Resources and Transparency in Denials of Emergency Involuntary Admissions to Psychiatric Hospitals*. NAMI Maine supports the delivery of timely, evidence-based treatment at an appropriate level of care within a person's community and surrounded by their support whenever possible. We recognize that there are times when individuals need a higher level of care, and we often hear stories of people fighting to access the resources they or their loved ones need.

NAMI Maine operates a helpline to support individuals across the state in connecting to resources and supports. Last year, our helpline supported over 990 individuals across the state regarding mental health challenges and resources. We have heard stories of individuals and their family members navigating the complex involuntary hospitalization process and the additional burdens of languishing in emergency rooms. This committee has worked diligently to attempt to provide a more comprehensive, collaborative, and supportive system for the state. At this time, we are making assumptions and guesses regarding barriers to individuals receiving necessary treatment. By collecting data for review, we will ensure that we are addressing the root problems and challenges of the system instead of hoping we are hitting the mark. Daily updated information will also allow for reviewing concerns and challenges facing specific individuals awaiting critical treatment.

Additionally, data is crucial in informed decision-making and policymaking. As discussions regarding systemic issues continue and many attempts are made to problem-solve the challenges to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable Mainers, we must base our decisions on information and data collected. Many assumptions and well-intended guesses regarding unmet needs result in individuals languishing in emergency rooms. However, without a better understanding and more concrete information, we could all continuously miss root causes in our well-intended actions.

The people of Maine deserve to receive timely treatment. Because of this, NAMI Maine supports the passage of LD 1239 and would encourage the committee to help improve access for our most vulnerable individuals to prompt and effective behavioral health treatment during their most acute times of need based on data.

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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