

## POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

### **LD 265: An Act to Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care**

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

As the state's largest grassroots mental health advocacy organization, NAMI Maine supports the passage of *An Act to Provide Women Access to Affordable Post-Partum Care*. Currently Maine, under MaineCare policy, is one of only 19 states that does not provide post-partum care past 60 days. By passing this legislation and extending post-partum coverage to the 12 months after the birth of a child, Maine will join 31 states and Washington DC in ensuring that women receive coverage during the most vulnerable period of their pregnancy.

Suicide is the second leading cause of maternal mortality in developing countries, the United States included. Research indicates that one in seven women experience clinical post-partum depression. Symptoms are often overlooked during the first month post-partum, as some symptoms of depression are often normalized. Post-partum depression is often not diagnosed until 3-6 weeks post-partum and can last up to 12 months. During this time period, women are at risk of developing debilitating symptoms, impacting their ability to care for their infant, as well as creating a barrier to bonding necessary for healthy development in infants. This can lead to multiple medical and developmental complications for both the mother and infant. Women of color and low-income are several times more likely to develop post-partum depression and other health related complications that may result.

NAMI Maine urges the committee to pass LD 265 in order to ensure that vulnerable women receive the necessary care and treatment in order to proactively address many complications that may arise if left untreated. By providing coverage to women during this complicated time in their lives, a significant barrier to treatment will proactively be addressed.

We understand that the State of Maine, not dissimilar to other states, is in a trying fiscal position only further complicated by the novel COVID-19. However the majority of other states across the nation have adopted this policy, understanding that it is a proactive measure to address long term impacts of multiple health complications that may arise.

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**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

[www.namimaine.org/advocacy](http://www.namimaine.org/advocacy)