

## POSITION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

### **LD 512: An Act To Provide Intensive Case Managers to Counties That Do Not Have County Jails or Regional Jails**

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 Intensive Case managers to Counties That Do Not have County Jails or Regional Jails*. NAMI Maine works closely with Law Enforcement and Mental Health Providers throughout the state. Intensive Case Managers have been found to be an invaluable tool that has been utilized in order to support diverting individuals from the criminal justice system and provides those that have become involved with the criminal justice system the necessary support in stabilizing symptoms and transitioning away from the high levels of incarcerations that individuals with mental health challenges face.

Although an individual with a severe and persistent mental illness is 11 times more likely to be the victim of a crime than to perpetrate one, once incarcerated they will serve three times longer periods of incarceration than someone who commits the same crime with no mental health challenge. Sadly 20% of young people who develop a severe and persistent mental illness receive their first formal intervention during an encounter with law enforcement. As we move towards training officers to better understand, recognize and divert from the criminal justice system as the first responders often to the scene, it is necessary that they also be provided resources to utilize in supporting the individuals in their communities. Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) has been identified as the gold standard of law enforcement response, with the overarching goal of developing a robust crisis and mental health system in which individuals who interface with police are able to receive services to meet their specific needs. Intensive Case Managers provide a component of meeting this need. We hear frequently from departments across the state looking for guidance of how to best support individuals who are without resources and services that are frequently interacting with departments. Officers are often put into the position of navigating the complexities of our mental health system, seeking guidance where they can, with minimal training and understanding. The ability to refer to an ICM would provide an evidence based and solid resource that would better support the individual and save tax payers dollars by avoiding incarcerations and hospitalizations.

The National Institute of Justice has noted that ICM programs that are properly funded and run within communities with resources and evidence based services available are found to reduce the recidivism rates of individuals with mental health and substance use challenges. Intensive Case Managers are one small section within the larger system that begins to build a robust network of supports. Although the fiscal note attached to this program, and others that would support through receiving of referrals for providing services, would assist in decreasing the long term costs to the state in the utilization of higher levels of care, such as hospitalizations and incarcerations, which are far more costly. As we look to save money within the system, it is important to note that although these programs may cost more initially, however they have been proven to decrease costs over time.



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### LEGISLATIVE CONTACT

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**POSITIONS & POLICY AGENDA**  
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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.*

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