

**NAMI New Hampshire Response to Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation Becoming Law
(July 19, 2024)**

Concord, NH – NAMI New Hampshire is deeply disheartened by the passage of HB 619, HB 1205, and HB 1312 – bills that curtail the rights of LGBTQ+ Granite Staters – and limit the protections that should be afforded to all our young people.

Throughout this session, legislators and policymakers heard directly from countless Granite Staters, especially youth and their families, how these bills will jeopardize the mental health and very lives of LGBTQ+ young people. Many advocates attended public hearings, standing before lawmakers to share their deeply personal stories. It behooves us all to listen to their experiences – and to recognize the negative impact these bills will have on many folks.

This legislation promotes stigma and discrimination while eliminating affirming environments and restricting access to healthcare. The mental health of our LGBTQ+ community members – especially trans and nonbinary youth – will be negatively impacted by these new laws.

“These laws are likely to exacerbate our youth mental health crisis – at a time when mental health providers are already stretched beyond capacity. NAMI NH is unwavering in our commitment to all Granite Staters having access to hope, help and health, so that they are able to live a full life in their community,” stated NAMI NH Executive Director Susan Stearns. “We remain dedicated to supporting all people impacted by mental illness and suicide – including our LGBTQ+ friends, loved ones, and neighbors.”

It doesn't have to be like this.

The Trevor Project found that transgender and nonbinary youth with access to LGBTQ+-affirming spaces reported lower rates of attempting suicide when compared to those without access.

When Granite Staters can obtain the care they need, and experience healthy, supportive environments, mental health flourishes. We must work to ensure that every individual in our state is able to live and thrive as their authentic self, free from stigma and discrimination. Our policies must promote mental wellness and increase access to social support and necessary care, rather than limiting it.

NAMI New Hampshire, along with advocates in every corner of our state, will continue our collective work to nurture and grow supportive communities, to help people access the care they need, and to eliminate stigma and discrimination that negatively impact mental health.

Throughout the 2024 legislative session, advocates from New Hampshire's LGBTQ+ communities consistently showed up – bravely sharing their deeply personal stories while often being met with blatant discrimination. These advocates were unwavering, strong, and resilient despite it all. But it takes a toll and it's ok to not be ok.

These are challenging times – but help and hope will always be available. We see you; we hear you; we are here for you. You are not alone.

If you or someone you know needs immediate support, you can call, text, or chat confidentially with a trained crisis worker 24/7 through 988 at no cost. You can reach specialized LGBTQ+ affirming counseling by texting PRIDE to 988 or pressing 3 when calling. Please do not hesitate to reach out for support – you matter.