

POLICY AGENDA FOR 129TH LEGISLATURE

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

1. Reduce Stigma

- A. Remove questions asking about mental health diagnosis from application to get a license
- These questions do not need to be asked when someone is getting or renewing a license.

2. Enhance Mental Health Workforce

- A. Clinician training in suicide prevention, assessment, and management
Representative Beebe-Center
- A study conducted by the University of Washington found only 50% of psychologists, 25% of social workers, and 6% of counselors have received training in suicide risk assessment. Due to this, in the 127th legislature, NAMI introduced legislation that would require social workers, licensed clinical professional counselors, and psychologists to complete 6 hours of continued education in suicide prevention, assessment, and management.
- B. Licensure for Intentional Peer Support Specialists
Representative Handy
- By creating a State Board of Intentional Peer Support Specialists and implementing a licensure process for those wishing to practice intentional peer support in the State, we will be creating a distinguished plan for the practice of intentional peer support in the State of Maine. This is essential since the need for peer support specialists in the mental health workforce is increasing rapidly. A State Board which oversees the profession will help to not only grow the number of intentional peer support specialists in the State, but also govern the practice to the degree that other mental health professionals are managed.

3. Ensure Appropriate Care and Treatment of Out-of-State Forensic Patients

- A. Create a process for 6-month reviews for forensic patients in custody of the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services who are sent out-of-state for residential mental health treatment
Representative Gattine
- It is crucial that anyone who has been found not guilty of a crime due to reason of insanity and sent out of Maine for residential treatment receives an independent review every 6 months to examine the individual's care and treatment. This will ensure that such individuals are receiving appropriate services. This independent review will be conducted by representatives appointed by The Consumer Council System of Maine, NAMI Maine, as well as a clinical social worker, a

psychiatrist, and an intentional peer support specialist licensed or certified to practice in the State of Maine, along with the individual's family or friends who may be involved in the care of the individual. The review committee will then submit recommendations to the Commissioner for the individual's future care and treatment.

4. Criminal Justice System Reform

A. Assessment Centers

Representative Warren

- Jails and hospitals are flooded with people struggling with unmet mental health treatment needs. There needs to be a more effective approach to getting people help. Individuals experiencing a mental health crisis should not be taken to jail, nor should they be sitting in emergency departments. Maine must create a facility that can assess an individual's mental health and connect them to the best resources to support their recovery.

B. Expansion of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Teams

Senator Bellows

- Men die by suicide four times more often than women. Increasing peer support in the high-risk field of public safety is intended to add another avenue to prevent suicide. The Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) de-briefing process has confidentiality language written into law, however Maine's language excludes fire and EMS. The CISM law needs to be more inclusive and define peer support.