



May 15, 2024

House Finance Committee
State House, Providence, RI 02904

Dear Members of the Committee:

National Alliance on Mental Illness Rhode Island (NAMI-RI) supports continued funding for our 988 crisis system, in order to provide all Rhode Islanders with ***someone to call, someone to respond and somewhere to go***. H 7035 proposes to codify the state budget funding for this comprehensive 988 system, and create a revolving trust fund to consist of state appropriations, grants, gifts and any money collected from fees dedicated to 988 in the future.

Rhode Islanders in crisis do not always seek out or receive the mental health support they need, as they are often met with barriers of a response that is not appropriate or comprehensive. Also a challenge is the access needed in order to receive crisis services. The full array of 988 services helps to bridge these gaps by providing the call/text/chat options on the crisis line, provide mobile crisis services and the BH Link site for in person supports. The proposed ongoing and sustainable funding stream would ensure that these services will always be available to those who need them, when they need them. Dedicating a permanent funding stream for 988, we can create a system that truly meets the needs for a safer and healthier Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Beth Lamarre", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Beth Lamarre
Executive Director, NAMI Rhode Island