



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI California

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April 18, 2022

The Honorable Tom Umberg, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
1021 O Street, Room 6730
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1338 (Umberg and Eggman) Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court Program – **SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Umberg:

NAMI-CA supports SB 1338 (Umberg and Eggman), which aims to deliver services to Californians with a serious mental illness or substance use disorder who too often languish – suffering in homelessness or incarceration – without the treatment they desperately need.

NAMI-CA is the statewide affiliate of the country's largest mental health advocacy organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Our over 110,000 active advocates and 62 affiliates include many people living with serious mental illnesses, their families, and supporters. NAMI-CA advocates on their behalf, providing education and support to its members and the broader community.

NAMI-CA believes that all people should have the right to make their own decisions about medical treatment. However, we are aware that there are individuals with serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder who, at times, due to their illness, lack insight or good judgment about their need for medical treatment. In cases like this, a higher level of care may be necessary, but must be the last resort. Our members have been calling for reform for their loved ones for years.

NAMI-CA believes that the availability of effective, comprehensive, community-based systems of care for persons suffering from serious mental illnesses will diminish the need for involuntary commitment and/or court-ordered treatment. Before we reach the stage of last resort, we must fully fund, build and staff our community-based system, so all who need care can access it long before they reach a crisis level.

NAMI-CA is heartened to see that accountability is one of the pillars of the CARE Court framework. We must hold the system accountable at all delivery points. We cannot take anything for granted in the implementation of a framework, as its effectiveness lies in the words that end up in statute, how it is implemented through the regulatory process, and to how each of our 58 counties will interpret and implement the framework. For these reasons, NAMI-CA supports SB 1338. I may be reached at jessica@namica.org or (916) 567-0163. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jessica Cruz,
MPA/HS
Chief Executive Officer