



National Alliance on Mental Illness

# NAMI California

March 17, 2021

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The Honorable Jim Wood  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Health  
State Capitol, Room 6005  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**AB 234 (Ramos) Office of Suicide Prevention– SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wood:

On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness - California (NAMI-CA), I am writing to request your support for AB 234 (Ramos), a bill that will ease financing for the statewide Office of Suicide Prevention at the California Department of Public Health.

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.

The Legislature has made significant strides in suicide prevention; however, risk of suicide and self-harm remains an issue across our state. Suicide risk is especially acute among adolescents, older adults, veterans, and LGBTQ youth and adults. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 15-24 in the U.S., with a nationwide survey finding in 2015 that 1 in 6 high school students reported seriously considering suicide in the previous year, and more than 1 in 12 reported attempting it.

Last year, the legislature took another step towards addressing this crisis. Assemblymember Ramos's AB 2112 (2020) took the first step in addressing this statewide issue by creating the framework for the Office of Suicide Prevention, however, funding will be necessary to make real progress on suicide prevention efforts.

AB 234 eases implementation of AB 2112 by removing the requirement that the Department of Public Health fund the Office of Suicide Prevention using existing department resources, opening the door for the development of a statewide suicide prevention strategy.

For the reasons outlined, we respectfully urge your support of AB 234 (Ramos). I may be reached at [jessica@namica.org](mailto:jessica@namica.org) or (916) 567-0163 with any questions you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jessica Cruz, MPA/HS  
Chief Executive Officer