



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI California

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April 18, 2022

The Honorable Jim Wood, Chair
Assembly Committee on Health
1020 N Street, Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2288 (Choi) Advance health care directives: mental health treatment –
SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Wood:

NAMI-CA is in support of AB 2288 (Choi), which will clarify current law to specifically create an advanced mental health care directive for those who may suffer from severe mental illness or other mentally debilitating issues in anticipation of a future mental health episode.

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 California supports efforts of persons with serious mental illnesses, family members, caregivers and service providers to work collaboratively to develop plans for treatment, services, and supports that are followed, when, and if, needed in the future. Psychiatric Advance Directives (PADs) help an individual with mental illness preserve their autonomy while ensuring the right care at the right time.

People who complete PADs are more likely to work collaboratively with their clinicians, experience fewer coercive crisis interventions, and feel that their personal needs for mental health services are being met.

When PADs are used correctly, medical providers, local hospitals, police departments and caregivers can provide care that is aligned with an individual's preference.

Current law allows individuals to create an Advanced Health Care Directive, which provides instructions about their health care and the ability to name a person to make decisions on their behalf if they are unable to do so. This power of attorney for health care is revocable at any time. However, the current Advanced Health Care Directive does not allow for decisions related to mental health care. The

Attorney General's office maintains an AHCD Form for individuals to fill out, however, there is no option or existing direction given on how or if an individual can include their preferences for mental health.

Policies that encourage the use of PADs, and prioritize including PADs in routine care, can help people with mental illness protect their autonomy in a crisis. For these reasons, NAMI-CA supports AB 2288. I may be reached at jessica@namica.org or (916) 567-0163. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jessica Cruz,
MPA/HS
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Members and Consultant to Assembly Committee on Health
The Honorable Steven Choi, California State Assembly