

HB 877 – Juveniles Charged as Adults – Confinement

FAVORABLE

Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 45,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland provides education, support and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

HB 877 would introduce new provisions regarding the incarceration of Juveniles. Under the bill, a court exercising criminal jurisdiction over a juvenile must be held in a juvenile detention facility by default. The court must consider seven factors with regards to the juvenile when ordering incarceration. One of those factors is the present mental state of the child, including whether the child presents an imminent risk of harm to the juvenile. Requiring this consideration goes further in supporting the behavioral health goals of the state. **NAMI respectfully request a favorable report to HB 877.**

NAMI partners with youth-serving agencies and criminal justice leaders to ensure that youth with mental health treatment needs get the support they need to stay out of jail. Those involved in nonviolent offenses should be diverted into effective home and community-based treatment programs.

NAMI Maryland is proud to work with Maryland’s local jurisdictions, public safety officers, and corrections officers when addressing juvenile mental health. Some of the initiatives NAMI is undertaking nationally and in Maryland include:

The Stepping Up Initiative

The Stepping Up Initiative, an exciting national campaign to challenge counties to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails. NAMI joins other national organizations calling on counties and communities nationwide to address this problem.

Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) and Other Local Programs

NAMI Affiliates around the country partner with local law enforcement on crisis intervention team (CIT) programs to help police recognize a mental health problem and get people to treatment. We also work on a variety of jail diversion programs, re-entry programs, and provide education and support to individuals and families at risk of involvement in the justice system.

Kathryn S. Farinholt
Executive Director
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland

Contact: Moira Cyphers
Compass Government Relations
MCyphers@compassadvocacy.com