

February 19, 2026

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and distinguished members of the Ways and Means Committee,

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 60,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

HB758 would primarily add 'peer recovery services' to authorized uses of the Problem Gambling Fund. This addition would allow the fund to be used to reimburse those who are acting as peer recovery specialists and providing behavioral health services to those who are struggling with gambling addiction and other gambling related issues. Gambling addiction is a currently growing issue in the country, especially in younger people in their twenties. This problem is exacerbated by the increasing availability of online gambling services. As more and more people struggle with these issues, it becomes even more important to have a strong network of peers who have lived experience. Having the option for a support network like this allows people to share their experiences and struggles and find a way out of the grasp of gambling addiction-together. Peer to peer recovery options also promote openness and understanding, something that is crucial to eliminating the stigma around addiction and really encouraging recovery. By allowing these peer recovery specialists to be reimbursed, the options for support and recovery for those struggling with gambling addiction will increase dramatically with more of an incentive to fulfill these crucial positions.

We at NAMI Maryland believe peer-to-peer recovery options to be extremely beneficial, so much so that we even offer one ourselves for mental illnesses in adults, including addiction. NAMI Peer to Peer is a mental health, wellness, and recovery program open to any adult with a mental health condition, providing an opportunity for mutual support, growth, and experiencing compassion and understanding from people who relate to your experiences. We believe that the passing of HB758 will greatly increase the options for peer-to-peer support for those struggling with gambling addiction and therefore greatly urge the committee for a favorable report.

Stephanie Slowly-Little
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