



Comments on House Bill 3091  
From Chris Bouneff, Executive Director, NAMI Oregon  
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House Committee on Health Care

NAMI Oregon wishes to express its support for the Dash-1 amendments for House Bill 3091, which clarifies that insurance carriers must cover essential behavioral assessments that assist in treating and diagnosing patients who present with a behavioral health crisis in an emergency room setting.

NAMI views HB 3091 as companion legislation to HB 3090, which mandates that hospitals adopt policies and procedures that lead to a more uniform and predictable response to patients who present in emergency rooms with a behavioral health crisis. In our conversations with hospital systems about HB 3090, we were told that one barrier to ERs administering evidence-based assessments was that insurance carriers don't routinely reimburse for such tests.

Just as no one would question the tests patients receive when they present in ERs with chest pains, insurance carriers, including coordinated care organizations, should not routinely question the medical necessity of a behavioral health assessment during a behavioral health crisis. NAMI Oregon believes this is a clear issue that falls under insurance parity. This legislation is designed to clarify any ambiguity around coverage for such assessments.

In addition to assessments in emergency rooms, the Dash-1 amendments also:

- Clarify that coverage extends to appropriate behavioral health assessments in other health care settings, most importantly in primary care. During our discussions around HB 3090, many primary care providers reported reimbursement issues as a barrier to conducting an assessment after a positive screening.
- Clarify that coverage extends to treatment and services that are medically necessary to treat a person with a behavioral health crisis and transition that person to a lower level of care. The findings of an assessment should drive treatment, which isn't always the case in behavioral health.

NAMI Oregon believes HB 3091 makes an important statement about insurance parity in Oregon and advances us toward more uniform standards of care and coverage. We are pleased to endorse the Dash-1 amendments and urge the Committee's support.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.