



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**nami**

**Alaska**

February 27, 2019

Alaska State Legislature

Re: Letter of support for SB 10 and HB 22, extending the “sunset” date for the Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Council.

To Whom It May Concern:

NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness), is the largest grass-roots organization in the country providing education and advocacy for families affected by mental illness. NAMI Alaska is the Alaska state chapter of NAMI. There are nearly 1,000 local NAMI affiliates, nationwide, of which four are in Alaska: NAMI Anchorage, NAMI Fairbanks, NAMI Juneau, and NAMI North Slope. These are volunteer-centered organizations providing classes and support for families impacted by mental illness.

NAMI Alaska supports SB 10 and HB 22, which would extend the “sunset” date of the Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Council to 2027.

Alaska, tragically, leads the nation in rates of suicide. We must do what we can to reduce the horrific toll suicide takes on Alaskan families. Suicide is preventable. “Treat the mental illness; prevent the suicide.” Like most illnesses, the earlier mental illness is diagnosed and treated, the better the outcome.

Information, and access to resources prevent suicide. The Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Council is an inexpensive and effective way to reduce Alaska’s rate of suicide. Extending the sunset date – keeping the Council from having to close its doors – is essentially free. Please support these bills. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sheila Harris  
Executive Director  
NAMI Alaska