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**Memo of Support**

To: Members of the NYS Assembly and Senate Education Committees

Re: [A3887](#)/S2585

Education, early recognition and intervention as well as working on prevention are keys to minimizing mental health issues that are common in adolescents and hopefully, eradicating the long-term disabilities caused by mental illness.

It is vital that New York's education system does a better job of creating a true comprehension of mental illness and mental health issues. Proper mental health is crucial to overall wellbeing, which is why it is necessary that mental health is incorporated into existing health education curricula.

This is why the National Alliance on Mental Illness-New York State (NAMI-NYS) strongly supports A3887/S2585 as this bill would mandate the inclusion of mental health education in the existing health curricula.

The integration of mental health into our educational curricula is long overdue. One cannot have physical health without mental health and our students need to know this.

The early recognition that mental health education provides can prevent our children from suffering the most debilitating long-term effects of serious and persistent mental illnesses. Integrating the proper supports can also lead to a better awareness of body image issues and a reduction in harassment and bullying, both of which can contribute to suicide rates in adolescents.

Incorporating mental health education and addressing the myths that exist about mental illness will also create broader understanding of psychiatric diseases, which will contribute to the destigmatization of those who are living with a mental illness. Disseminating accurate information to schools and to the community will increase the likelihood that children and teens struggling with symptoms are not viewed negatively by their peers, which can reduce torment. If we can do that, we increase the odds that youth will accept treatment, thus leading to the improved outcomes generated by early intervention.

Attached are some statistics about mental health issues in young adults which speak to why providing our students with mental health education is so vital. We urge you to support A3887/S2585 and give our students a complete health education. For more information please contact NAMI-NYS at 518-462-2000.