



NAMI-NEW YORK STATE

National Alliance on Mental Illness - New York State

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Memorandum of Support

S.1646 - Huntley

S. 185 - Morahan / A. 4572 - P. Rivera

NAMI-NYS supports the above captioned legislation, each of which refers to the coverage of mental illness by group health insurance.

S.1646, an act to amend the mental hygiene and insurance law seeks to permanently extend Timothy's Law, New York's landmark statute mandating comparable coverage for mental health treatment. Timothy's Law increased access to treatment for thousands of New Yorkers suffering from psychiatric disabilities; in the absence of swift legislative action, this law will expire at the end of 2009.

S.185 / A.4572 seeks to add posttraumatic stress disorder to the list of "biologically based" mental illnesses currently covered under Timothy's Law, including schizophrenia/psychotic disorders, major depression, bipolar disorder, delusional disorders, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorders, anorexia, and bulimia. Like these other diagnoses, posttraumatic stress disorder is a biologically-based mental illness: Numerous brain imaging studies have demonstrated the existence of both functional and structural brain differences when comparing the images for PTSD patients and those of persons without the diagnosis.

Given the adoption of federal parity requirements that complement and strengthen Timothy's Law, the Executive Committee of the Timothy's Law Campaign urges the New York State Legislature to continue its leadership in support of parity by making it permanent and strengthening it to assure coverage of needed treatment for our most vulnerable citizens by approving S.1646 and S.185 / A. 4572.