

November 29, 2022

RE: Written Testimony in Support of SB. 199 and Psychiatric Exemption Amendment

Dear Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chairman Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and Members of the House Civil Justice Committee, my name is Luke Russell, and I am the Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio, often referred to as NAMI Ohio. On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio, I want to thank Members of the General Assembly for their commitment and efforts to ensure individuals with serious mental illness have access to life-changing medications.

We are proud that we are the largest mental health advocacy organization in the country representing over 500,000 Ohio citizens and their families whose lives have been invaded by mental illness. NAMI Ohio has 41 affiliates throughout Ohio representing all 88 counties. Each of you have constituents with mental illness and their families who have experienced the stigma of mental illness.

NAMI Ohio fully supports an amendment that would add the disorder state to the psych exemption. This language will help include new drugs to treat schizophrenia that will likely not be classified as anti-psychotics or anti-depressants. This modern technology is a protein known as a TAAR1 - Trace amine-associated receptor 1. (Reference - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8704992/>)

Amendment 0932 will allow for better patient access to needed medications. The psych exemption (current law) allows for patients to collaborate with their medical provider and to have access to the medication they need while allowing patients to adhere to their prescribed medication without interruption. The language simply adds the words "or is a drug that is prescribed for the treatment of schizophrenia, schizotypal disorder, or delusional disorder" to include the disease state. New technologies are being developed that we believe may not be listed as anti-psychotics or anti-depressants but will be game changers for people living with schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia is a serious chronic illness that can have a lifetime effect on the patient. Unfortunately, people living with schizophrenia that is not treated with medication have an increased risk of hospitalization or incarceration. Comprehensive care including medication management, therapy, and social support services can significantly improve the person's quality of life. This amendment will allow for better patient access to needed medications and NAMI Ohio supports including this in Senate Bill 199.

Thank you for your time and attention today, and I am open to any comments or questions you may have regarding this legislative provision. Feel free to contact me at [Luke@namiohio.org](mailto:Luke@namiohio.org) or 614-224-2700.

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