

My name is Marie Kiely, and I live in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. I'm writing today to ask you to support HB 751 to strengthen New Hampshire's substance use treatment system.

My son and only child Ben died on October 24, 2023 from alcohol use disorder after multiple attempts to stop drinking, including four voluntary residential stays and outpatient treatment. He was just 44 years old. Unfortunately, he did not receive evidence-based medical treatment. I'm providing a few excellent sources of medical information below that I unfortunately only found after Ben's death. It is heartbreaking to learn now that there are proven effective treatments available that could have saved Ben's life and that there was so much I and others could have done to help and support him if we had received accurate information from those providing substance use disorder treatment services.

Ben's death from alcohol use disorder was a shock to everyone who knew him. His family had never seen him drink. His friends knew he was struggling with alcohol but did not know how to help. None of us imagined that someone as young and healthy as Ben could die from alcohol. He worked full-time, had close relationships with friends and family and had many interests. He was highly intelligent, caring and kind. His medical records state that he was "highly motivated to stop drinking". He was a wonderful son, and I miss him every day.

I recently learned that New Hampshire's substance use treatment system is mostly unregulated, leaving patients and families to navigate a system of programs and services that vary in quality across the state. Further, NHPR's The 13th Step podcast, released in 2023, detailed alleged incidents of sexual assault and other misconduct in one of New Hampshire's largest substance use treatment networks.

HB 751 proposes to improve New Hampshire's substance use treatment system by strengthening patient protections and ensuring high quality services. Creating a licensing requirement for outpatient substance use treatment provider organizations and a Behavioral Health Specialist position within the N.H. DHHS' Office of the Ombudsman would help address these issues. I hope that certified addiction medicine physicians will be consulted in creating the licensing requirements. Many Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADCs) and substance use disorder specialists are only versed in 12 step recovery programs, not in addiction medicine; few are aware of evidence-based alcohol treatment.

Again, I urge you to support HB 751 to protect the health and safety of Granite Staters who are trying so desperately to recover from addiction. Thank you for your consideration.

Here are a few sources of medical information on evidence-based treatment of alcohol use disorder:

[National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#) [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#)

Dr. George F. Koob, NIAAA Director – presentation on AUD and effective science-based treatment: [#NIAAA: The Science Behind Preventing, Diagnosing, and Treating Alcohol Use Disorder](#)

The American Society of Addiction Medicine – a medical society for physicians, clinicians and professionals who specialize in addiction medicine, providing certification, education and resources [ASAM - American Society of Addiction Medicine](#)

The Canadian Alcohol Use Disorder Society: [Our Story — Canadian Alcohol Use Disorder Society](#)
Dr. Jeff Harries' video: Alcohol Use Disorder – A New Approach can be found on the CA AUD Society website. They describe the medications for AUD as a true medical miracle; there are not many medical conditions that are this responsive to medications.

The Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center: [Grayken Center for Addiction | Boston Medical Center](#)
[Podcast episode: “Is it time to abandon the ‘tough love’ approach to addiction?” | News | Grayken Center for Addiction TTA | Boston Medical Center](#)