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Today, DMH operates 10 facilities that have a total of 788 beds and 48 acute beds.<sup>1</sup> DMH has also just experienced drastic 9C cuts, forcing it to cut almost \$14 million in programs including: eliminating adult day programs, social clubs and Supported Employment (SEE); Club House services were reduced; ¼ of DMH case managers were laid off and Jail Diversion programs were reduced. Fortunately, DMH used a one-time infusion of trust funds equaling \$24.2 million to lessen the impact on service cuts last year.

However, in the next fiscal year, FY 2010, DMH must come up with a \$50 million reduction (its annualized reduction for FY 2010). The big problem with reducing inpatient beds is – where will the money come from to provide the community supports that people will need once they are released from the hospital?

With this background, NAMI Mass has the following comments:

1. Adequate access to acute and chronic hospitals is the number one complaint I hear from NAMI members across the state. Once a hospital is closed, its beds will be lost forever, so this is a decision with far-reaching consequences. We urge that if DMH patients are released, that DMH maintain an adequate number of hospital beds in its system.
2. If DMH closes any inpatient facility, it must know in advance how many patients will need community services, what these community services will cost, and where will these former patients live? The money saved that was used to maintain the hospital must be made available for critical community mental health supports. Without this firm financial commitment, NAMI Mass fears that some of these people may end up homeless or in jail or prison.
3. A related question is since the new state-of-the art state hospital at Worcester State will not open until 2012, where will these people go for acute and chronic mental health services between now and then? Currently, DMH beds have a 97% occupancy rate. Many DMH hospital beds have closed already. With this high demand for DMH beds, where will people without family or support go?
4. DMH must also undertake long term monitoring of any patients released from an inpatient facility so that the state can easily track where people end up and whether or not they receive the community based services they need.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



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<sup>1</sup> DMH currently operates 788 beds at hospitals in Worcester, Westborough, Taunton, Tewksbury, S.C. Fuller/Boston, a unit at Shattuck and contracted beds at Park View Specialty Hospital in Springfield. DMH also operates 48 acute beds at Quincy, Corrigan and Cape & the Islands, and 30 adolescent beds at Westborough Hospital.