

NAMI Minnesota Policy on Police Body Cameras

The use of body cameras by police is increasing in Minnesota and across the country. Their use is beneficial in terms of transparency and accountability by police. Their use is problematic in terms of personal privacy. NAMI Minnesota is concerned that recordings of people experiencing a mental health crisis could become public without the individual's consent. The individual could face repercussions that could negatively impact their life. People with mental illnesses are not the only ones concerned about privacy. Victims of crime often do not want videos to become public for fear that they will be revictimized; it's their story to tell. A video recording is very different from a police report and includes images that are more sensitive. We do not want people to feel uncomfortable calling police or 911 when needed for fear of being videotaped.

NAMI Minnesota supports privacy policies on the videos of police body cameras that:

- Establish clear policies on when cameras can be used. They need not be on all the time but should be used when responding to a call for service or any encounter that becomes hostile or confrontational.
- Establish disciplinary actions when a police officer fails to record or interferes with a camera inappropriately.
- Law enforcement must inform people that an incident involving them has been recorded and that they have a right to confidentiality and access to the tape.
- Retention periods should be clear and only tapes that are flagged should be kept.
- Public disclosure of the tapes should only be done with the written consent of the person especially in situations where there is no indication of police misconduct.
- Redaction of people's faces should be used when feasible and should be noted.
- The person, their attorney or advocate, should always have access to the recording and be able to "flag" it just as an officer can. An internal or external investigation can have access to the tapes.

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