



*For the past 75 years, hospitals in the Granite State have been collaborating through the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA) to be an effective advocate for the patients and communities they serve. Effective advocacy is driven by a vision for improving health and health care in New Hampshire, the involvement and engagement of our member hospitals, and a clear and unified message. The Association provides leadership for hospitals through education, information and representation and serves as a trusted resource for legislators and other public officials, the media and important stakeholders throughout the state.*

*“... New Hampshire’s hospitals generated \$3.7 billion of economic activity in 2008 ...”*

### **Hospitals in New Hampshire**

Hospitals are an essential part of the fabric of communities all across New Hampshire. They provide critical health care services and serve as an important hub for health care throughout the community. They truly are cornerstones of their communities.

But the hospital we traditionally think of – a place with beds for inpatient care and an emergency room open 24/7 – has changed. *In response to diverse community needs and to adapt to a changing, complex environment, hospitals in New Hampshire are often a system of health services* that may include: primary care and specialty physician practices; an ambulatory surgery center; a health center or clinic; an assisted living or a skilled nursing home; home care and hospice programs; a rehabilitation therapy center; and much, much more. In fact, more and more primary care physician practices – and to a growing extent, specialty physician practices – are becoming part of a “hospital system” because they are no longer financially able to operate as independent practices. If hospitals were not in a position to hire those physicians and support their practices, access to primary care would be a significant problem in many communities across New Hampshire.

### **Helping their Communities**

The care that hospitals provide reaches far beyond the walls of their buildings and supports a number of important, unmet community needs. The women and men of New Hampshire’s hospitals are on the front lines of care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and live out their mission every day of helping people live healthier lives. In 2007, New Hampshire’s hospitals provided over \$360 million in community benefits through a number of important services, programs and education that meet the needs of those they serve. Community benefits can be provided through direct subsidies for care to those who don’t have insurance or through grants to other organizations hospitals collaborate with in their communities, such as community health centers, mental health and substance abuse centers, and local schools, to name a few.

*“In 2007, New Hampshire’s hospitals provided over \$360 million in community benefits ... to meet the needs of those they serve.”*

### **Contributing to their Local Economies**

And each hospital serves as a vibrant economic pillar in its community. New Hampshire’s 26 acute care, community hospitals directly employed 37,515 people in 2008, which generated an additional 28,136 jobs out in the community that do business with hospitals or those employed by the hospital. From medical supplies companies to the grocery store and hardware store on Main Street, New Hampshire’s hospitals generated \$3.7 billion of economic activity last year through direct income for hospital employees and others throughout the community.

## Doing More with Less

But, like every state in the nation, New Hampshire has suffered as a result of the economic collapse that has been gripping the country over the past year. Hospitals have seen reductions in funding through the Medicaid program, despite the fact that the State of New Hampshire will receive in excess of \$250 million in additional Medicaid funds through the federal stimulus bill. And hospitals have seen sharp increases in the number of people who need care but don't have coverage or are having difficulty paying for their portion of their health care bills.

Cuts to New Hampshire Medicaid funding and the fact that individuals and families are losing private insurance coverage does not reduce the medical needs of New Hampshire's low and moderate income citizens. It simply increases the burden to business and individuals in New Hampshire who must pay higher premiums and medical bills to make up the difference. Otherwise known as "cost shifting," this hidden tax is the result of a substantial shortfall in payments for providing care to all who need it, regardless of their ability to pay for their care. In fact, the total amount of the cost shift from government underpayments, bad debt and charity care was \$388 million in 2007.

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*In 2008, New Hampshire's hospitals:*

- *Employed 37,515 people;*
- *Generated an additional 28,136 jobs in other NH businesses;*
- *Generated \$3.7 billion of economic activity;*
- *Cared for 596,000 people in the emergency room ;*
- *Provided care to 132,500 people as inpatients;*
- *Delivered over 13,000 babies; and*
- *Provided over \$360 million in community benefits.*

*New Hampshire's Hospitals  
... Cornerstones of our  
Communities*



## Our National Advocacy Agenda

As the debate over national health care reform unfolds in Washington, DC, NHHA will continue to pursue its agenda, Health for Life: Better Health. Better Health Care. Our goals for reform include:

- **A Focus on Wellness** – Good primary care, health education and a healthy lifestyle are essential components to improving individual and community health status. As health improves, costs of health insurance and health care can be better controlled.
- **The Most Efficient, Affordable Care** – Americans will not be satisfied unless and until the cost of insurance and the cost of health care are affordable.
- **The Highest Quality Care** – Motivate doctors, nurses, hospitals, nursing homes, and others to work together and team up with patients and families to make sure the right care is given at the right time, in the right setting, every time.
- **The Best Information** – Good information is the gateway to good care.
- **Access and Coverage for All** – Health coverage for all is a shared responsibility. Everyone ... individuals, business, insurers and governments ... must play a role in both expanding coverage and paying for it.

# New Hampshire Hospital Association 2010 Advocacy Priorities



## Access and Coverage

Access to coverage is essential to receiving timely primary, preventive health care. Eleven percent of New Hampshire residents lack health insurance coverage. That's 144,000 people in our state. Those without insurance typically delay seeking care, often waiting until their conditions become much more severe and costly to treat. New Hampshire's hospitals take care of many of these patients through their emergency departments, clinics and physician office practices. Hospitals have always helped patients without insurance get the care they need ... providing over **\$350 million in uncompensated care** in 2008 to uninsured and underinsured individuals in their communities.

Two innovative programs help address this problem. New Hampshire's hospitals voluntarily created the **NH Health Access Network** in 2003 to make it easier for the uninsured and underinsured to access health care. NHHAN remains a critically important collaboration of hospitals, doctors, community health centers and others, which use a uniform set of eligibility guidelines and a common application to make the process of requesting financial assistance more efficient and standardized throughout the state. **New Hampshire Medication Bridge** is a public-private partnership, organized by hospitals, to help eligible uninsured and underinsured patients of all ages receive needed prescription medications for chronic illnesses from pharmaceutical companies.

1. **National Health Reform.** National health care reform holds out the promise of expanding access and coverage to all Americans. This will help ensure that New Hampshire residents get the right care, in the right place, at the right time.  
⇒ NHHA will advocate for expanded health care coverage for all Americans as part of national health care reform.
2. **Medicaid.** The New Hampshire Medicaid program *must be adequately funded* to ensure access to high quality health care services for Medicaid beneficiaries. The continued failure of the Medicaid program to pay hospitals and other providers the full cost of providing care only serves to drive up the costs to those with private insurance through higher premiums and medical bills. As a result of Medicaid underpayments, hospitals are forced to subsidize the state Medicaid program in excess of **\$50 million annually!**  
⇒ NHHA will continue to educate lawmakers about the impact of Medicaid cuts to hospitals, including the cumulative effect of incremental rate reductions over the past five years.
3. **Mental Health and Substance Abuse.** New Hampshire's mental health and substance abuse system is severely constrained due to lack of adequate resources, including insufficient inpatient and residential treatment capacity, and a lack of community-based services. In the absence of adequate mental health and substance abuse services, many patients in need of services end up in the emergency departments of community hospitals across the state. A recent study by the Foundation for Healthy Communities of mental

health needs in rural hospital emergency departments highlights the tremendous challenges these small hospitals have in treating patients suffering a mental health crisis.

- ⇒ Hospitals support an increase in beds and capacity at New Hampshire Hospital;
- ⇒ Hospitals support an increase in funding for services provided by community mental health centers; and
- ⇒ Hospitals support a change in coverage under the Medicaid program to provide substance abuse counseling and adequate funds to provide this service throughout the state.

4. **Workforce.** There is a health care workforce shortage in New Hampshire, particularly in the underserved areas of our state, creating an access issue for residents as they seek the care that they need. While primary care providers are of significant concern to communities across the state, some specialties are also in great need around the state.
  - ⇒ Hospitals support full funding for state and federal scholarships and loan repayment programs for those students willing to live and work in rural settings.
  - ⇒ Hospitals support continued funding of the federal Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs) programs that help support additional providers in the rural areas of our state.
  - ⇒ Hospitals support full funding of graduate medical education programs under the New Hampshire Medicaid program.

# New Hampshire Hospital Association 2010 Advocacy Priorities



## Quality

Providing high quality health care at the right time, in the right setting, every time, is the goal of all hospitals and health care providers in New Hampshire. According to independent, validated measures, health care provided in New Hampshire's hospitals consistently ranks as the highest in the country for the treatment of heart attacks, heart failure, pneumonia and those undergoing surgery. Hospital leaders have been collaborating through the **Foundation for Healthy Communities** on several statewide initiatives which promote hand hygiene, reduce central line bloodstream infections and adopt a patient safety checklist in all procedure areas. Since 2005, the **New Hampshire Health Care Quality Assurance Commission**, created by the state legislature, has brought hospital and ambulatory surgery center leaders together to promote high quality and safe care to all patients in hospitals and ASCs across New Hampshire.

1. **New Hampshire Health Care Quality Assurance Commission.** The New Hampshire Health Care Quality Assurance Commission, which was created by the Legislature, has been working for the past four years to bring hospital and ambulatory surgery center leaders together to promote high quality and safe care to all patients seeking services in hospitals and ASC's in New Hampshire.
  - ⇒ The legislation which created the NH Health Care Quality Assurance Commission sunsets after five years in 2010, and hospitals in New Hampshire enthusiastically support the reauthorization of the Commission so that it can continue to conduct its important work.
2. **Workforce.** There is a health care workforce shortage in New Hampshire, particularly in the underserved areas of our state, creating not only a concern for access, but for the ability to provide the care that patients need.
  - ⇒ Hospitals support full funding for state and federal scholarships and loan repayment programs for those students willing to live and work in rural settings.
  - ⇒ Hospitals support continued funding of the federal Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs) programs that help support additional providers in the rural areas of our state.
  - ⇒ Hospitals support full funding of graduate medical education programs under the New Hampshire Medicaid program.

# New Hampshire Hospital Association 2010 Advocacy Priorities



## The Most Efficient, Affordable Care

Efforts to reform health care hold significant promise to reshape the health care system throughout the country and here in New Hampshire. Keeping health care affordable will involve every segment of the health care system – insurers, hospitals, business, physicians, nurses, employers, and individuals. Increasing access to health care insurance and adequate primary care will help ensure that more people are getting the right care, at the right time, and in the right setting. Insurance market reforms that will make it easier to access – and keep – health insurance, along with efforts to redesign benefit structures and focus on making healthier lifestyle choices will help reduce the cost of health care over time. The **Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)** Action Plan for New Hampshire, implemented by the Foundation for Healthy Communities, is bringing healthy lifestyle resources to communities, schools, families and worksites all over the state.

1. **Health Promotion.** Insurance market reforms that will make it easier to access – and keep – health insurance, and efforts to redesign benefit structures and focus on making healthier lifestyle choices will help reduce the cost of health care over time.

  - ⇒ Hospitals support efforts to work collaboratively with payors, businesses and others to improve the health of individuals through wellness and other health promotion programs.
  - ⇒ Hospitals support efforts to encourage healthy lifestyles through tobacco prevention and cessation, increased physical activity and healthy eating and reducing preventable causes of hospitalization.
2. **Medicaid Funding.** Government has a role to play in creating a sustainable health care delivery system. The continued underfunding of the New Hampshire Medicaid program is unsustainable. Hospitals that continue to get paid far less than the cost of treating Medicaid patients (Medicaid reimbursements to hospitals are less per day for both inpatient and outpatient services than they were in 1999) will only make it more difficult for hospitals and other providers to continue to serve the patients and communities that depend on them while they strive to build a better health care system for the future.

  - ⇒ Hospitals support adequate funding of the Medicaid program and believe payment rates that were cut in November, 2008 and carried forward in the budget for the 2010/11 biennium should be restored.
  - ⇒ Hospitals support adequate reimbursements from the federal Medicare program that adequately reflects the wages hospitals in New Hampshire must pay to attract and retain the highly skilled doctors, nurses and other caregivers who care for our patients and communities.
3. **Payment Reform.** Other efforts to reform the way health care is delivered and paid for will also have a significant impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system, as well as helping to reduce the overall growth of health care costs. Efforts to redesign payments will require greater integration of hospitals, doctors and other

providers, and will result in the assumption of greater risk for those providers and increased accountability for the outcome of the care provided. These new payment models will lead to the creation of new health care delivery systems ... systems made up of hospitals, doctors and other providers along the full continuum of care, from primary and preventive services to acute, post acute and rehabilitative services.

- ⇒ Hospitals support efforts to work collaboratively with payors, providers and others to build and pilot new payment and delivery system models.
- ⇒ Hospitals support efforts to modify state and federal laws or regulations that could impede the ability of providers to work collaboratively to build these new delivery system structures.

4. **Administrative Simplification.** As we work to reform our health care system to make it more efficient and effective, we must eliminate duplicative and burdensome rules, regulations or practices that only serve to drive up the cost of care without improving quality wherever it exists.

- ⇒ Hospitals support efforts to reduce the administrative burden of public and private insurance and will work in collaboration with all payors to reduce these unnecessary costs.
- ⇒ Hospitals support efforts to safeguard the confidentiality of patient information, and also support efforts to ensure uniformity across states as a way to avoid confusion regarding privacy and security and the release of medical information between patients, providers and third parties, especially across state borders.

5. **Health Information Technology.** Information technology can play a major role in creating a more efficient, affordable health care system so that patients and clinicians have the right information, at the right time, in the right setting, every time. Research shows that certain kinds of information technology – such as computerized physician order entry (CPOE), computerized decision support systems and bar-coding for medication administration – can reduce errors, and improve patient care and outcomes.