2017 ADVOCACY AGENDA

Hospitals have been coming together through the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA) for more than 80 years to advocate and support public policy that ensures citizens of the Granite State have access to high quality, affordable care. New Hampshire hospitals are eager to continue the partnership with the Governor, legislative leaders and key policy makers on both sides of the State House in Concord to support and extend many of the accomplishments over the past few years and achieve progress on other important issues.

2018-2019 STATE BUDGET AND MAINTAINING THE MET SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The Medicaid Enhancement Tax (MET) Settlement Agreement that was reached in June 2014 was a significant step forward in providing stability to the state’s hospitals and health care systems, patients and the state budget. Absent the agreement, the state was facing lawsuits that threatened to disrupt the state budget, lower New Hampshire’s bond rating, and make it more difficult for patients to get the care they needed. Implementation consistent with the Settlement Agreement with the hospitals and SB 369 is essential.

Failure to make good on the settlement agreement would be a significant step backwards and would put the entire agreement at risk. Settling the lawsuits is predicated on the successful, complete and timely implementation of the MET agreement. Any attempt to undo that agreement would mean those legal cases would continue, creating increased, and even greater, budgetary issues for policymakers as it would place the state’s short and long term financial health at risk.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HEALTH PROTECTION PROGRAM

Enactment of the New Hampshire Health Protection Program (NHHPP) in 2014 was a significant, bipartisan achievement that brought together businesses, providers and other
advocates to extend private insurance coverage to more low-income, uninsured New Hampshire residents. Currently, more than 51,000 low-income residents in New Hampshire have gained access to healthcare coverage under the NHHPP.

Hospitals determined in 2016 that it was essential to extend the NHHPP beyond its original end date of 12/31/16 to ensure that low-income patients and families receiving coverage under the law continue to have access to the care and security it offers. **In order to accomplish this goal, the hospitals agreed to make voluntary donations to cover a portion of the state’s cost starting in 2017 and through the end of 2018, and we look forward to working with policymakers in Concord in the coming biennium to craft a New Hampshire solution that ensures continued coverage for our most vulnerable citizens.**

**CHALLENGES WITH RECRUITMENT OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

Hospitals in New Hampshire employ thousands of health care workers that contribute significantly to both the local and state economy. The challenges faced by all sectors of health care in recruiting and retaining skilled workers have become a major issue for the industry. **We look forward to working with policymakers and regulators to identify opportunities to improve the recruitment and retention, training and professional development, and licensure issues affecting health care workers.**

**MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE CRISIS IN NH**

Addressing the state’s ongoing mental health and substance misuse crisis is one of the most pressing public health and public safety issues facing the state. New Hampshire hospitals are supportive of the efforts to address the issue by both policy makers and regulators. **Continued focus on a comprehensive approach to address this public health and safety crisis is imperative, and hospitals stand ready to work with stakeholders across New Hampshire to tackle this important challenge.**