

New
Hampshire
Hospital
Association



ANNUAL REPORT
2019

Letter to Members

As 2019 draws to a close, we want to pause and thank you for your participation in, and contributions to, the work of the New Hampshire Hospital Association over the past year. The hallmark that has defined our ability to be successful in addressing challenges has been our work together, and your active involvement as members and engagement in the work of the Association and the Foundation for Healthy Communities will continue to be pivotal in the months and years ahead.

As the health care environment continues to evolve, the work of the Association and its members could not be more important to the health of our communities and the patients you serve. Hospitals took a significant stand with regard to the federal lawsuit filed by the ACLU-New Hampshire against the state and our members, claiming the rights of patients in an acute psychiatric crisis boarding in hospital emergency departments awaiting transfer to the appropriate setting for their care were being violated, but only to the extent that it infringed on their ability to receive timely probable cause hearings. The Association and the vast majority of our members intervened in that case to ensure that the fundamental issue of every patient's right to receive timely access to the specialized care they need and are entitled to under state law, was included in the court's review. While that legal matter continues its way through the courts, significant progress was made during the 2019 legislative session, from new designated receiving facility (DRF) beds to an increase in the rates paid to all DRF providers; the movement of the children's services out of New Hampshire Hospital to Hampstead Hospital and the redeployment of up to 48 additional adult beds at the state hospital, to additional transitional housing beds and more mobile crisis services.

But so much more was achieved this past legislative session, including a 3.1% across the board rate increase for all Medicaid providers, full funding of our MET/DSH settlement, and blocking an attempt to apply the meals and rooms tax to the cafeterias of not-for-profit hospitals. This couldn't happen without the tremendous credibility the Association enjoys with legislators because of the critical role you play in the communities they represent and the relationships you have built as partners, problem solvers and pillars of your communities.

And as we close the year, the NHHA Board of Trustees has launched a new strategic planning initiative designed to align our work and path forward in support of better health and health care in New Hampshire. We look forward to sharing that with the broader membership in the new year and engaging you in our efforts to ensure the Association continues to be on the forefront of health policy and advocacy for you and your organizations in the years ahead.

Again, thank you for your continued involvement and active participation in our work together.

Sincerely,



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Chair, NHHA Board of Trustees



Stephen M. Ahnen
President, NHHA

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Androscoggin Valley Hospital

About the New Hampshire Hospital Association

Collaborating with hospitals since 1934, the New Hampshire Hospital Association provides leadership through advocacy, education and information in support of its member hospitals and health care delivery systems in delivering high quality health care to the patients and communities they serve.

Our Mission

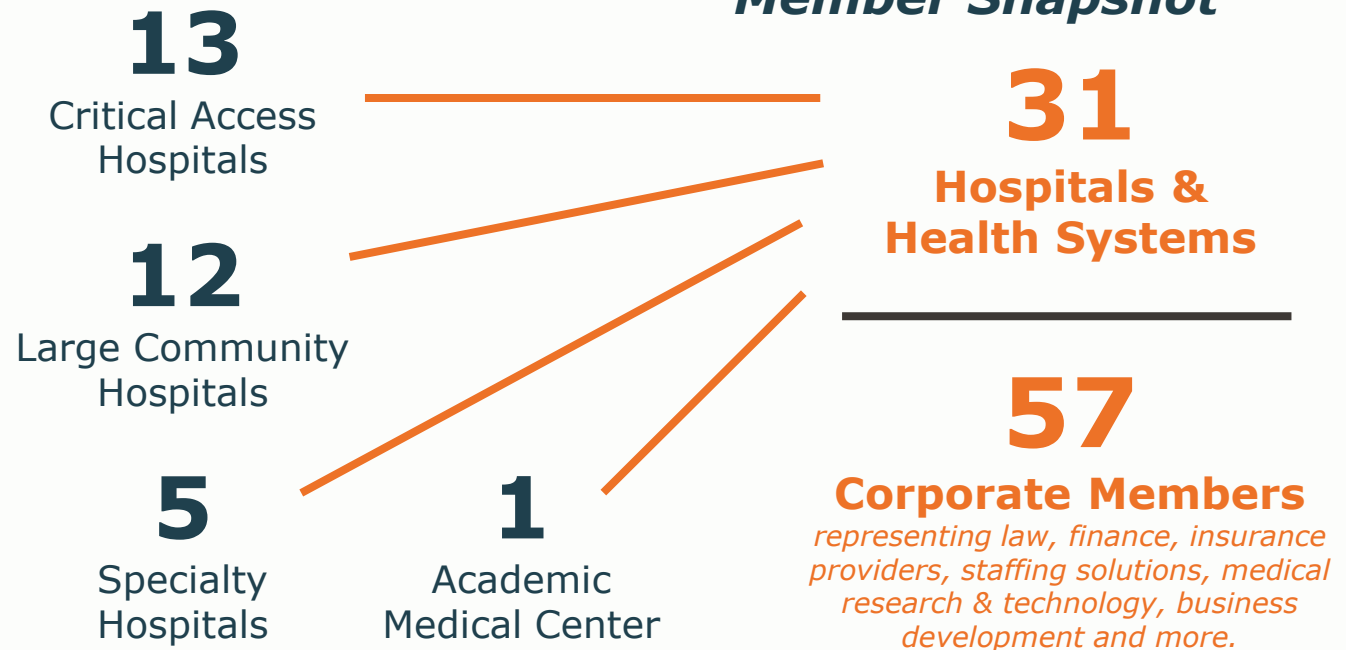
To provide leadership through advocacy, education and information in support of its member hospitals and health care delivery systems in delivering high quality health care to the patients and communities they serve.

Our Vision

To be the leading and respected voice for hospitals and health care delivery systems in New Hampshire, working together to deliver compassionate accessible, high quality, financially sustainable health care to the patients and communities they serve.

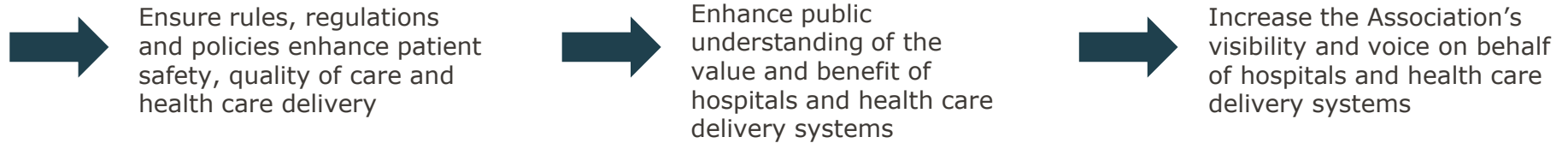


Member Snapshot



The New Hampshire Hospital Association is committed to being the leading resource on health care issues, representing the best interests of our member hospitals and health systems and the communities they serve, and advocating at the state and federal levels for policies that ensure viability, increased access and improved quality.

Strategic Priorities





2019 Priorities	Status
Ensure the State Budget for FY 20/21 includes key provisions relative to behavioral health care services, increased Medicaid reimbursement rates and proper implementation of Medicaid DSH Program	✓
Address the systemic issues & challenges facing NH's mental health system by supporting the implementation of meaningful reforms that ensure access to behavioral health care	✓
Ensure proper implementation of the 7-year (2018-2024) Medicaid Enhancement Tax / Disproportionate Share Hospital Settlement Agreement	✓
Preserve protections for hospitals relative to Special Health Care Licensing, access to affordable health care in rural areas, and rooms & meals tax exemptions afforded non-profit institutions	✓
Address the substance use disorder crisis by supporting substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery efforts, and hospital implementation efforts of providing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in emergency departments and primary care settings	✓
Secure reimbursement requirements from insurance carriers relative to 3-D Mammography, emergency medical and behavioral health services for patients waiting for appropriate level of care, and ensure Medicaid MCO prompt-pay and credentialing standards align with state requirements	✓
Enhance recruitment and retention of health care workforce by removing barriers relative to licensing, background checks and available resources	✓
Support hospitals and health systems' efforts to improve patient safety and quality of care	✓
Continue efforts to strengthen the financial viability of the Association	✓


Supporting Access to Critical Behavioral Health Care Services


Of significant importance this year was the creation of the **State's 10-Year Mental Health Plan** aimed at addressing the behavioral health crisis facing our state through meaningful reforms, sustainable solutions and additional resources vital to the health and well-being of New Hampshire residents. Alongside member hospitals, community mental health centers and other key stakeholders, NHHHA's highest priority in 2019 was ensuring that the State address the systemic issue of inadequate resources across the entire mental healthcare system. Through the 10-Year Mental Health Plan and the SFY 20/21 Budget, there will be **additional inpatient capacity** at New Hampshire Hospital, **increased reimbursement rates** for Designated Receiving Facilities (DRFs), **additional supported housing units**, **additional mobile crisis teams** and **reimbursement for patients boarding in emergency rooms** awaiting transfer to appropriate care.


Together, we remain committed in our efforts to ensure critical behavioral health services are available for our most vulnerable patients during their time of crisis, so that we can provide the right care, at the right time, in the right place on behalf of the patients and communities we serve:


 **Intervened in the ACLU lawsuit** to ensure the larger, fundamental issue of a mental health system that fails its patients due to inadequate capacity **to provide the necessary, immediate care for all patients seeking mental health care services** is addressed

 Continued efforts with the *Rx Abuse Leadership Initiative* to educate patients & families on the importance of safe opioid disposal, distributing more than **90,000 Deterra drug deactivation pouches** to patients through hospitals and community partners

 Continued efforts with **community mental health centers** and **mobile crisis response teams** to implement best practices in the delivery of care for patients seeking behavioral health services, such as universal screening to reduce the risk of suicide, through the **Behavioral Health Clinical Learning Collaborative**

 Partnered with the State on **The Doorway Program** to enhance access to resources for those suffering with substance use disorders

 **Strengthened the State's efforts to address substance use disorders** by continuing to fund the Governor's Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment & Recovery Fund

 Assisted hospitals statewide in their efforts to implement **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services** in hospital emergency departments and physician practices to better serve patients seeking treatment

Ensuring State Funding Priorities Advance Health & Access to Care

After significant debate, the Governor and legislature moved forward with a compromise budget that will advance several important initiatives by making much needed investments in critical areas vital to the health of our patients, including mental health and substance use. Through this budget, we were able to successfully secure a **3.1% across the board increase in Medicaid rates for all providers** each year of the biennium to help address workforce shortages and gaps in our health care system caused by New Hampshire's low Medicaid reimbursement rates - one of our highest priorities. In addition, the SFY 20/21 Budget abides by the 2018 MET Settlement Agreement, **fully funding the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments** owed to hospitals.

The SFY 20/21 Budget provides a **3.1% increase** in Medicaid rates across the board for all providers

Supporting Patients through Integrated Systems of Care

To thrive in an ever-changing healthcare environment, hospitals and health systems are implementing a range of strategies, including building integrated systems of care to ensure access to important health care services on behalf of the patients and communities they serve. While HB 552, Standards for Acquisition Transactions, attempted to apply new regulatory requirements when these new relationships formed, we were able to successfully modify the bill **by extending the effective date to January 1, 2020** so that it wouldn't affect current transactions already in progress, as well as ensured the **review of the impact of the transaction wouldn't extend beyond the needs of the immediate community served**. We disagree with creating obstacles that impact the availability of health care services, and we'll continue our efforts to limit duplicative and burdensome barriers to enhancing access to care for New Hampshire residents.

Unifying Our Voice, Mobilizing Champions

Hospitals and health systems engage in critical conversations during the political process on issues including regulation, patient access to care, reimbursement, quality reporting, improving patient safety and more. To ensure public policy supports health system stabilization, provides sustainability and promotes the transformation of health care, the Association launched the **New Hampshire Hospital Association Political Action Committee for Patients (NH HOSPAC)** as a critical tool in its ability to send a powerful voice of unity to state legislators. As anchor institutions, hospitals exist as places of health, healing and hope for their communities through the promise of the blue and white "H". It has never been more important for the health care community to speak in a unified voice to engage legislators and ensure they understand the implications of public policy on a hospital's ability to provide safe and effective quality health care.



The New Hampshire Hospital Association and the Foundation for Healthy Communities are dedicated to working with member hospitals and community partners across the state to implement evidence-based, best practices and exploring new, innovative ways to prevent harm, reduce healthcare costs and improve patient and staff safety.

Improving Patient Safety & Quality of Care

The Foundation for Healthy Communities continued its work supporting hospitals in their efforts to improve patient safety and quality of care, and to reduce health-related complications, health care inequity and unnecessary readmissions. Leading the way to a healthier New Hampshire, hospitals focused on patient falls, adverse drug events, pressure injuries, hospital-associated infections, readmissions, antibiotic stewardship and workplace safety through the implementation of best practices to **reduce hospital acquired conditions by 20%** and **readmissions by 12%** from initial levels of the **Partnership for Patients** initiative. Patient family engagement is used as a cross-cutting strategy to improve quality, safety and the patient experience. In addition, we were able to secure permanent standing in state law for the **NH Health Care Quality & Safety Commission**, a critical resource for hospitals that promotes accountability, cultures of safety and the sharing of best practices and prevention strategies.

Since 2016, NH hospitals have avoided **2,150** adverse events and achieved **\$18.7M** in healthcare cost savings

NH hospitals have supported

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aspiring physician leaders through the *Physician Leadership Development Program*

Developing Physician Leaders for Tomorrow's Health Care System

With its first year successfully under its belt, the **New Hampshire Physician Leadership Development Program (NHPLDP)** welcomed **17 incoming physician leaders** into its 2020 - 2022 cohort. Led by Neil Meehan, DO, Chief Physician Executive at Exeter Health Resources and held in partnership with the *New Hampshire Medical Society* and the *University of New Hampshire's Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics and College of Health and Human Services*, the NHPLDP cultivates effective physician leadership from bedside to boardroom by teaching management, communication and leadership skills, fostering effective communication, and empowering physicians to foster change among their colleagues.

Bringing Value through Business Solutions

Through its **Endorsed Business Partner (EBP)** program, the NHHA delivers greater value to its membership by connecting hospitals and health systems with carefully selected business partners who provide value-added services at reduced costs. These endorsed partners address members' needs through innovative business solutions, while providing critical support to the Association in the form of non-dues revenue. The Association endorsed 4 new partners in 2019: **Commerce Bank, Healthcare Workforce Logistics, Performance Healthcare Solutions** and **VISTA Staffing Services**.

Since its launch in 2018, the EBP program has endorsed **8 partners** to provide critical business solutions to members

Alongside the American Hospital Association and on behalf of our members, the New Hampshire Hospital Association focuses its federal legislative efforts on public policy that protects access to care, ensures health care coverage, advances the transformation of health care delivery, enhances patient safety and quality of care, and makes health care more affordable for all.

Surprise Billing

The issue of protecting patients from surprise medical bills has been a dominant topic throughout 2019, with both the House and Senate proposing several solutions. At the end of 2019, Congress was poised to consider a compromise bill that we believe continued to miss the mark. Hospitals remain concerned that the solutions proposed provide an unlevel playing field to insurance companies – essentially giving them little to no incentives to negotiate appropriate reimbursement rates with hospitals. A competing proposal from the House Ways and Means Committee appears to be more aligned with the approach we have been advocating over the past year with our congressional delegation and will be part of the legislative discussions in the new year.

Our message remains the same: **First and foremost, patients should be protected from surprise bills. We believe that once the patient is protected from surprise bills, providers and insurers should then be permitted to negotiate payment rates for services provided. We strongly oppose approaches that would impose arbitrary rates on providers. It is the insurers' responsibility to maintain comprehensive provider networks, and a default payment rate would remove incentives for plans to contract with providers.**

According to the AHA, 340B hospitals provided more than **\$56 billion** in total benefits to their communities in 2016 alone.

340B Drug Program

Hospitals across the US, including New Hampshire, have committed to the American Hospital Association's **340B Good Stewardship Principles** which emphasize the need to communicate the value of the 340B program to their hospitals, the delivery of vital services and their commitment to their communities. For more than 25 years, the 340B Drug Program, which is paid for with drug discounts and not tax dollars, has been critical in helping hospitals expand access to health services, including lifesaving prescription drugs. More than half of New Hampshire's hospitals qualify as 340B hospitals, and NHHA appreciates the commitment and support of our congressional delegation members in supporting this vital resource.

The most recent budget agreement delays the DSH cuts through

05/22/20

and we'll continue to seek further delays and a permanent fix to this vital resource.

Medicaid DSH

The **Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH)** program provides hospitals that serve a disproportionate number of Medicaid and uninsured patients with payments to help offset the unreimbursed costs of care. Congress cut Medicaid DSH payments in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), enacted in 2010, reasoning that hospitals would care for fewer uninsured patients as health coverage expanded under the ACA. However, the projected increases in coverage have not been fully realized. To date, the Medicaid DSH cuts have been delayed numerous times, including through the most recent budget agreement which funds the federal government through the rest of the federal fiscal year (9/30/20) and **delays the DSH cuts through 5/22/20**. We will continue to seek a further delay and a more permanent fix in the new year.

We Care, We Vote

NHHA, along with the American Hospital Association, created voter message cards containing information on issues important to us to target presidential candidates sweeping through our First in the Nation primary state. The message cards, focused on rural health, affordability and behavioral health, includes key questions that every presidential candidate should answer:



- Rural:** What specific policies do you support that will help ensure there is access to care in rural areas?
- Affordability:** What policies do you support that will make health care more affordable and help hospitals provide greater value while transforming the way care is delivered?
- Behavioral Health:** what specific policies do you support that will help ensure all patients, especially those with a mental illness and substance use disorder, are able to get the care they need?

The message cards, along with other materials, have been made available to all hospitals throughout the state.

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