



SENATE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

SB 403 – relative to health care workforce investments.

Testimony

Good morning, Madame Chair and members of the committee. My name is Ben Bradley, Vice President State Government Relations with the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA), representing all 26 of the state's community hospitals as well as all specialty hospitals.

The NHHA supports SB 403, relative to health care workforce investments. This important bill makes one-time investments at a time when our industry faces unprecedented challenges that make it difficult to sustain, build, and retain a strong healthcare workforce. Vacancies across New Hampshire's healthcare industry remain significant as evidenced in part by our latest vacancy report, which shows a total vacancy rate for all hospital positions of 15.5%.

Today, I would like to focus on one section of SB 403 that is of keen interest to our hospital members. Specifically, the provision for voluntary certification of community health workers (CHW). Hospitals employ community health workers but do not receive any reimbursement for the important services they provide to support patients in their ongoing care and recovery. By passing SB 403, the Office of Professional Licensure and Certification (OPLC) will be able to promulgate rules to establish certification criteria for community health workers that would assist in eliminating some of the barriers currently in place that prevent community health workers from seeking reimbursement for the services they provide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on SB 403. I am happy to take your questions.