



Chairman, Rep. Wayne MacDonald,
& the House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee

Re: SB403, relative to healthcare workforce investments

Good Evening, Chairman MacDonald and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brodie Deshaies, and I am the Communications & Policy Manager for NH Hunger Solutions. Our organization advocates to end food insecurity, improve access to nutritious food, and address the root causes of hunger for all New Hampshire residents. NH Hunger Solutions is committed to improving equitable access to federal nutrition programs.

SB403, legislation relative to healthcare workforce investments, provides the foundation for Community Health Workers to connect people to the support and services they need most.

Food insecurity is a leading cause of chronic disease, illness, death, and increased healthcare costs in NH and the US. Because of this, NH Hunger Solutions co-leads a workgroup with the Department of Health & Human Services and partners from around the state to improve nutrition equity. The group's priorities are grounded in evidence-based practices recommended by the CDC. They are to:

1. Screen community members in healthcare, public health, and community-based organization settings for hunger, housing, career services, child care, and other social support needs.
2. Refer community members for needed services and ensure they get connected.
3. Match community health workers from healthcare and public health organizations to help screen and connect people with the needed services.

An essential element of the fight against hunger in New Hampshire is ensuring everyone living with food insecurity can connect to the programs and resources they need. Community health workers are essential to this goal.

One significant barrier to implementing these approaches is that healthcare and public health organizations need to be reimbursed for providing the community with the connecting services carried out by community health workers. This bill would rectify this discrepancy and establish the pieces that allow Medicaid and other third-party payers to reimburse Community Health Worker services.

This bill is critical in ensuring that NH healthcare and public health organizations can provide NH residents with the healthcare and social support they need to stay healthy and give back to the NH economy.

Thank you for your time and for taking my testimony. I appreciate your service to our great state.

Hon. Brodie Deshaies
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