



**New Hampshire Senate
News Release**

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Senate Passes Legislation to Fund Mental Health Settlement

Includes language to increase settlement transparency & strengthen rainy day fund

Concord, NH - The State Senate today approved legislation to fund the mental health settlement entered into by the Attorney General's office last year. The bill authorizes approximately \$9 million in new spending in this budget to expanding mental health service capacity in integrated community settings. Funding for the legislation is authorized from funds not otherwise appropriated in the budget, and a Senate amendment allows funds obtained by the 1115 waiver currently under consideration to help offset the cost.

"It will be the responsibility of the Governor and the Department of Health and Human Services to manage the budget carefully to ensure the Department can continue to meet the lapse figures prescribed by the budget as well as the new spending required by the Attorney General's settlement," said Senate Finance Committee member Peter Bragdon, R-Milford.

In addition, the bill also includes language previously agreed to by the Senate designed to increase legislative oversight of settlements entered into by the Attorney General's Office.

"The need to authorize a significant level of new spending outside of the budget process again highlights the importance of increasing the level of communication between the Department of Justice and the legislature with regards to these settlements," continued Sen. Bragdon.

Specifically, the Senate amendment requires the Attorney General to obtain Legislative Fiscal Committee approval before expending any settlement funds received, and to report to the Fiscal Committee on the nature of any settlements or judgments entered into on behalf of the state. Additionally, the amendment requires that 10-percent of any settlements over \$1 million dollars be deposited in the state's Rainy Day Fund.

The legislation passed the Senate on a voice vote.

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