



**New Hampshire Senate**

## **News Release**

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### **Sununu Youth Services Center working group meets, tours facility**

#### *Members to develop plan to expand services provided*

**Concord, NH** – Legislators and key stakeholders who make up the Sununu Youth Services Center working group, formed by Senate Finance Chair Jeanie Forrester (R-Meredith), kicked off their first meeting with an introductory tour and brief discussion Monday. The group, chaired by Senator David Boutin (R-Hooksett), who also chairs the Senate Ways and Means Committee, will consider expanded uses for the Sununu Center to better address some of the critical needs of the state as well as create greater efficiencies within the Center.

“New Hampshire has seen some major changes in our state, including fewer youth in the criminal justice system, which is a good thing. Unfortunately, we have also seen a significant rise in substance abuse and an increase in citizens with untreated mental health issues, with too few resources and treatment centers available,” said Senate Finance Chair Jeanie Forrester (R-Meredith).

“As we developed the legislative budget, we saw a potential opportunity to address these issues by expanding the services provided by the Sununu Youth Services Center to include treatment of substance abuse victims and those with mental illnesses. We included a timeline for producing a transformational plan for the Sununu Center in the legislative budget, which was later vetoed by the Governor. Despite not having a permanent budget in place, we recognize the need to continue our work towards a plan that better utilizes the Sununu Center while ensuring a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars,” Forrester added.

“Today’s tour and meeting served as an opportunity for both legislators and key stakeholders to observe and gain a better understanding of the current use of the Sununu Youth Services Center. I look forward to working with this group to make progress in developing a transformational plan that will address some of the major concerns affecting the community, including substance abuse and mental health issues, as well as creating greater efficiency in the services currently provided at the Sununu Center,” said Senator David Boutin (R-Hooksett).

#### **Sununu Center Working Group participants:**

Senator Jeanie Forrester (R-Meredith)

Senator David Boutin (R-Hooksett)

Senator Sharon Carson (R-Londonderry)

Senator Bette Lasky (D-Nashua)  
Senator Nancy Stiles (R-Hampton)  
Senator John Reagan (R-Deerfield)

Representative Richard Barry (R-Merrimack)  
Representative Frank Byron (R- Litchfield)  
Representative Marjorie Smith (D-Durham)

Mary Ann Cooney, Associate Commissioner Department of Health and Human Services  
Lorraine Bartlett, Director of the Division for Children Youth and Families, DHHS  
Justice Ned Gordon – 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit, Merrimack Country District Division  
Joseph Diamant, Director of the Division of Community Corrections and Programming Services  
Michael K. Skibbie, Policy Director, Disability Rights Center of New Hampshire  
Mayor Ted Gatsas, Manchester

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