



New Hampshire Senate

News Release

For Immediate Release:

August 24, 2015

Media Contact:

Kate Giaquinto

kate.giaquinto@leg.state.nh.us

(603) 271-3043

Working group reveals concerns among DHHS agencies

Stalls opening of 10-bed crisis unit, limits in home elderly care

Concord, NH – Today, the working group dedicated to reviewing the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services met to discuss the impacts of the vetoed state operating budget for services including developmental disabilities and waitlist, home health care, and mental health services.

“The agencies providing essential services to citizens with developmental disabilities, mental health needs, and the elderly that presented during today’s meeting expressed an increased level of uncertainty in their ability to provide and pay for services as a result of the vetoed state operating budget,” said Senate Finance Chair Jeanie Forrester (R-Meredith).

“One of the most critical impacts of the vetoed budget is the delay in opening of the 10-bed crisis unit at New Hampshire Hospital because of a lack of necessary funding to hire the specialized nursing staff the crisis unit requires. I am concerned because New Hampshire Hospital will not be able to begin the characteristically lengthy hiring process until a permanent budget is put into place, which delays the opening of the crisis unit even further into the future,” said Forrester.

“I urge legislators to override the vetoed budget on Sept. 16 so that the funding will be available to open 10-bed crisis unit at New Hampshire Hospital as soon as possible,” added Forrester.

“Today’s working group also looked at the impacts of the vetoed budget on Home nursing care for New Hampshire’s elderly population. New Hampshire’s elderly who qualify for nursing home care can elect to stay in their homes and receive in home nursing and personal care which proves beneficial to individuals, but also results in a reduced cost to the state overall,” said Senator Kevin Avar (R-Nashua).

“Although the Governor attempted to raid funds dedicated to home health care providers earlier this year, the senate and house were able to restore this funding as well provide an additional 5% increase in rates, the first since 2001, as part of the legislative budget,” said Avar.

“We heard today that because the Governor vetoed the legislative budget, the in home health care providers are not receiving the 5% rate increase, which has resulted in a limit to the home care visits they are able to provide,” added Avar.

“I am concerned that the vetoed budget is taking a serious toll on the most vulnerable populations in our state, including the elderly population. The quickest solution to all of the issues we heard today is to vote to override the legislative budget veto on Sept. 16, which will provide increased funding to better support the services DHHS agencies provide,” said Avar.

Department of Health and Human Services working group participants:

Senator Jeanie Forrester (R-Meredith)
Senator Kevin Avar (R-Nashua)
Senator Sharon Carson (R-Londonderry)
Senator Dan Feltes (D-Concord)
Senator Martha Fuller Clark (D- Portsmouth)
Senator Bette Lasky (D-Nashua)
Representative Neal Kurk (R-Weare)
Representative Dan McGuire (D-Epsom)
Representative Mary Jane Wallner (D-Concord)

###