



## NH SENATE PRESS RELEASE

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### **Senator Feltes Responds to Sununu's Lack of Leadership on Children's Mental Health During COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Concord, NH** - Last June, SB 14 was signed into law - Senator Dan Feltes' (D-Concord) bill to establish a statewide children's system of care, including a statewide children's mobile crisis team, in alignment with the DCYF Adequacy and Enhancement Assessment, the federal The Family First Prevention Services Act, and the 10 Year Mental Health Plan.

SB 14 was fully funded in the biennial budget, including, but not limited to, a statewide mobile crisis, intervention, and stabilization team to treat children in their communities, not in emergency rooms. However, more than a year later, components of that bipartisan legislation have yet to move forward. In June of 2020, Senator Feltes sent a letter and Right-To-Know request to Governor Sununu, outlining his concerns that SB 14 had not been fully implemented and children were suffering as a result, especially due to increased COVID-related need. Governor Sununu did not respond to the letter nor the Right-To-Know request.

Governor Sununu has failed to even issue a Request for Proposals to stand up these services for children, as required by law. A Request for Information was issued and responses received several months ago.

**In response to the news that as of Thursday, August 13, 2020, there were twenty children waiting in emergency rooms for mental health services. Senator Dan Feltes (D-Concord) released the following statement:**

"These mental health services were critical for our children and our families prior to COVID-19, and they are even more critical as a result of this pandemic. Governor Sununu isn't doing his job and he isn't following the law he signed - because of that, Granite State children and families are suffering. As of yesterday, there were twenty children waiting in emergency rooms for mental health care. That's unacceptable. Particularly during the current crisis, the state cannot continue to delay taking these crucial steps and allowing our children to slip through the cracks. It's time to move forward with the full implementation of the Children's System of Care."

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