

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Sophie Walsh 271-3469

SB 506-FN, relative to community engagement and work requirements under the state Medicaid program.

Hearing Date: January 21, 2026

Time Opened: 1:00 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:20 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Avard, Birdsell and Long

Members of the Committee Absent: Senators Rochefort and Prentiss

Bill Analysis: This bill directs the department of health and human services to establish community engagement and work requirements under the New Hampshire granite advantage health care program, or the state's expanded Medicaid program, pursuant to authorization for such requirements established in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025, Public Law 119-21.

This bill is a request of the department of health and human services.

Sponsors:

Sen. Pearl
Sen. Sullivan
Sen. Gannon
Sen. Abbas

Sen. Gray
Sen. Avard
Sen. Lang
Rep. Moffett

Sen. Innis
Sen. McGough
Sen. Murphy
Rep. W. MacDonald

Who supports the bill: 10 people signed in support of the bill. Full sign in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Sophie Walsh (sophie.walsh@gc.nh.gov).

Who opposes the bill: 95 people signed in opposition to the bill. Full sign in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Sophie Walsh (sophie.walsh@gc.nh.gov).

Who is neutral on the bill: 1 person signed in neutral on the bill. Full sign in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Sophie Walsh (sophie.walsh@gc.nh.gov).

Summary of testimony presented:

Senator Howard Pearl, Senate District 17

- This bill is seeking to get New Hampshire in compliance with the work requirements contained in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

- Senator Pearl asked the Committee to hold this bill, as the same language has been put in Senate Bill 134 from last year, which has been retained in the House. If that bill successfully moves forward, then this bill will not be necessary.
- On or before December 1, 2026, or on an earlier date within 30 calendar days after publication of the federal application template, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) shall submit required documentation relative to implementing community engagement and work requirements to CMS as a condition of Granite Advantage eligibility in accordance with the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.
- This bill suspends the provisions of RSA 126-AA:2 directly related to the community engagement and work requirements for the duration of the federal community engagement and work requirements under Public Law 119-21, section 71119.

Henry Lipman, Department of Health and Human Services

- Mr. Lipman stated that he is speaking in support of the bill.
- This bill allows the Department to implement requirements through a state plan amendment, rather than having to do an 1115 waiver.
- This will let the Department comply with the time frame set forth. CMS has communicated to the Department that a state plan amendment would be the more efficient option to get in compliance.
- From a budget standpoint, doing a state plan amendment will also come with less administrative costs.
- This bill allows the Department to be consistent with federal statute, rules, and regulations.
- This bill also respects the prior work of the legislature on work requirements, as it suspends that statute as long as federal legislation is in effect.
- Mr. Lipman agreed with Senator Pearl that holding this bill for now is a good course of action.

Jim Monahan, Community Behavioral Health Association

- Mr. Monahan explained that while he did not sign-in in support or opposition, there is overall concern with the implementation of work requirements for the people Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) care for.
- Mr. Monahan agreed that holding onto this bill makes sense. It is his understanding that a lot of community engagement and work guidelines are still forthcoming from the U.S. DHHS and CMS.
- The One Big Beautiful Bill Act contains exemptions for individuals in treatment for mental illness, but we do not know how frequently they will need to demonstrate that they are exempt or how this will be reported.

- It is very likely that due to the work requirements, thousands of people will lose Medicaid. Mr. Monahan noted that CMHCs, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and hospitals are required to care for people regardless of their ability to pay.
- Mr. Monahan thinks the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is going to drive uncompensated costs high, and this financial instability is likely to create difficulties for the state's ability to care for people.
- Mr. Monahan noted that this primarily, if not exclusively, applies to the people in the Granite Advantage Program. He emphasized that there is a large exposure for providers with people losing coverage.
- Senator Avard asked if the One Big Beautiful Bill would affect the Granite Advantage federal match, and Mr. Monahan said it did not.

Nancy Biederman

- Ms. Biederman explained that she is a member of the Rare Disease Advisory Council, but she is speaking on her own behalf.
- As the parent of an individual over the age of 18 with multiple rare diseases, Ms. Biederman is concerned about what could happen if her child's disease progresses and she can no longer work.
- If this bill passes, she hopes it will include a provision to educate patients about new requirements and provide robust consumer assistance.
- She emphasized that states should: conduct proactive outreach and education to patients about policy changes, establish robust and accessible consumer assistance, provide ample opportunity for patients to give feedback, promote continuity of care, comply with Medicaid due process requirements, protect patient privacy, and prioritize transparency.

David Trumble

- Mr. Trumble cited a study from the Urban Institute finding that the number of eligible individuals likely to be disenrolled will exceed the number of people who would not be eligible and disenrolled. It also found that most people will have difficulty meeting work requirements unless there is automatic eligibility.
- The Urban Institute also found that 18,000 people were disenrolled in the first year following such changes in Arkansas, and federal court stopped the program the following year.
- The Kaiser Family Foundation completed a May 2025 study finding that 92% of people on Medicaid are working, in school, caregiving, or have a disability. Only 8% are either retired or unable to find work.
- The Kaiser Family Foundation also found that 13% of New Hampshire Medicaid recipients will lose coverage due to new federal rules, with work requirements making up a large component.

- Mr. Trumble emphasized that there needs to be a sufficient amount of caseworkers with a reasonable workload to assist people. It is also important to streamline documentation, invest in education and public outreach, establish automatic eligibility for those with long-term and chronic conditions, give special attention to those dealing with mental health and substance use disorder recovery, and provide job training and assistance to help people find jobs.
- Senator Long asked what year the Urban Institute study was from, and Mr. Trumble said it was from March 2025 and analyzed a more limited congressional proposal for work requirements from 2023.