

SB 244-FN-A - AS INTRODUCED

2025 SESSION

25-0971

05/09

SENATE BILL **244-FN-A**

AN ACT relative to expanding access to primary health care services, increasing the number of direct health care providers, increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates, and making an appropriation therefor.

SPONSORS: Sen. Rosenwald, Dist 13; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. Reardon, Dist 15; Sen. Long, Dist 20; Sen. Perkins Kwoka, Dist 21; Sen. Fenton, Dist 10; Sen. Prentiss, Dist 5; Sen. Altschiller, Dist 24; Rep. Wallner, Merr. 19; Rep. Telerski, Hills. 11; Rep. Weber, Ches. 5

COMMITTEE: Health and Human Services

ANALYSIS

This bill expands access to primary health care services by directing the department of health and human services to amend its contract with the Bi-State Primary Care Association's Recruitment Center in order to expand health care workforce recruitment and retention efforts, increases funding for such programs, and increases Medicaid reimbursement rates.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT relative to expanding access to primary health care services, increasing the number of direct health care providers, increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates, and making an appropriation therefor.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Short Title. This act shall be known as The New Hampshire Needs Caregivers Act.

2 2 Statement of Purpose.

3 I. New Hampshire's health care workforce is the foundation of our health care safety net,
4 and the foundation is in crisis due to a lack of consistent investments. As a result, residents of New
5 Hampshire will go without care. Recently, the state worked to stabilize the system using federal
6 funds, including direct aid to hospitals, community providers, and long-term care facilities, and
7 investments in our Medicaid program; however, there remains a strong need to invest in programs to
8 foster a future health care workforce within the Granite State.

9 II. The state of New Hampshire shall address the health care workforce shortage by
10 leveraging state funding through public and private partnerships, investing in programs designed to
11 incentivize students to seek employment in health care and remain in New Hampshire upon
12 graduation; and equipping health care organizations with the tools necessary to secure skilled
13 clinicians.

14 3 Department of Health and Human Services; Division of Public Health Services; Public-Private
15 Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Hub; Infrastructure Contracts.

16 I. The department of health and human services, division of public health services, rural
17 health and primary care section shall amend its current contract with Bi-State Primary Care
18 Association's Recruitment Center to require the Recruitment Center to strengthen the infrastructure
19 needed to sustain and transform community-based primary care services through the creation of a
20 Public-Private Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Hub that promotes collaboration
21 across the continuum of care. Bi-State Primary Care Association shall administer the Public-Private
22 Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Hub and manage the sub-recipient contracts,
23 and leverage federal, state, and private funding, and seek new funding opportunities when
24 appropriate.

25 II. Bi-State Primary Care Association shall design the sub-recipient contracts to facilitate
26 health care workforce development, recruitment, retention, support nursing preceptor and
27 mentoring programs, provide training and technical assistance, and loan repayment opportunities.
28 Bi-State Primary Care Association shall:

1 (a) Expand and implement its national outreach and marketing campaign designed to
2 recruit qualified clinicians to New Hampshire;

3 (b) Collaborate with an area health education center to increase the number of entry-
4 level clinical staff through investments in programs designed to improve care and access to care,
5 particularly in rural and underserved areas of this state, and to enhance the health and public
6 health workforce in New Hampshire. Such programs may include: engaging under-represented
7 populations in the health care professions in middle school and high school; offering health
8 professions students opportunities to experience learning in rural or medically underserved regions
9 of New Hampshire designed to encourage participants to settle and work in these regions; and
10 enriching the standard health curriculum by providing health professions students training in
11 aspects of health care such as integration of behavioral health and primary care, social determinants
12 of health, cultural competency, interprofessional team-based care, and addressing the challenges
13 associated with substance misuse through career ladder training and leadership programming. The
14 area health education center shall partner with the New Hampshire Nurses Association by
15 convening stakeholders to build a collective voice for nursing excellence and workforce sustainability
16 in New Hampshire by determining the current initiatives that collect demand, supply, and academic
17 workforce data, and identify the gaps. The stakeholders shall make recommendations for a future
18 New Hampshire Nursing Workforce Center as designated by the National Forum of Nursing
19 Workforce Centers;

20 (c) Collaborate with an area health education center for the purpose of creating and
21 expanding graduate level nursing mentoring and precepting programs. The area health education
22 center shall provide the necessary support to graduate level nursing preceptors and the health care
23 organizations that act as training sites;

24 (d) Collaborate with an area health education center for the purpose of supporting the
25 New Hampshire Needs Caregivers Program. This program shall promote, recruit, and fund training
26 of up to 500 individuals interested in a career in health care as a licensed nursing assistant. The
27 New Hampshire Needs Caregivers Program shall create scholarship opportunities to cover the cost
28 of tuition for licensed nursing assistant training up to \$2,600; supportive services; and assist
29 individuals in finding courses and employment;

30 (e) Expand student loan repayment opportunities for clinicians with bachelors' degrees
31 employed by non-profit health care organizations in exchange for the agreement to work for the non-
32 profit health care organization for 24 months for part-time employees to 36 months for full-time
33 employees; and

34 (f) Collaborate with a family medicine residency program in rural New Hampshire at a
35 teaching health center program to support the training of family medicine residents in the north
36 country. The teaching health center program shall be accredited or eligible for accreditation by a
37 nationally recognized accreditation agency.

1 4 Department of Health and Human Services; Rural Health and Primary Care Section;
2 Appropriations.

3 I. Appropriation; Public-Private Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Hub.
4 The sum of \$580,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$580,000 for the fiscal
5 year ending June 30, 2027 are hereby appropriated to the department of health and human services,
6 division of public health services, rural health and primary care section for the purpose set forth in
7 paragraph I of section 3 of this act. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out
8 of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

9 II. Appropriation; Workforce Recruitment, Advertising, and Marketing. The sum of
10 \$250,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and \$250,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30,
11 2027 are hereby appropriated to the department of health and human services, division of public
12 health services, rural health and primary care section for the purpose described in paragraph II(a) of
13 section 3 of this act. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out of any money in
14 the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

15 III. Appropriation; Bi-State Primary Care Association Sub-Recipient Contract with an Area
16 Health Education Center. The sum of \$3,100,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and the
17 sum of \$3,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 are hereby appropriated to the
18 department of health and human services, division of public health services, rural health and
19 primary care section for the purpose set forth in paragraph II(b) of section 3 of this act. The
20 governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out of any money in the treasury not
21 otherwise appropriated.

22 IV. Appropriation; Bi-State Primary Care Association Sub-Recipient Contract with an Area
23 Health Education Center; Graduate Nursing Student Preceptors and Financial Support for Host
24 Organizations. The sum of \$300,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of
25 \$300,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 are hereby appropriated to the department of
26 health and human services, division of public health services, rural health and primary care section
27 for the purpose set forth in paragraph II(c) of section 3 of this act. The governor is authorized to
28 draw a warrant for said sums out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

29 V. Appropriation; Bi-State Primary Care Association sub-recipient contract with an area
30 health education center; New Hampshire Needs Caregivers. The sum of \$500,000 for the fiscal year
31 ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$750,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 are hereby
32 appropriated to the department of health and human services, division of public health services,
33 rural health and primary care section for the purpose set forth in paragraph II(d) of section 3 of this
34 act. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out of any money in the treasury
35 not otherwise appropriated.

36 VI. Appropriation; Bi-State Primary Care Association sub-recipient contracts; Public-Private
37 Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Hub Loan Repayment Programs. The sum of

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1 \$300,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$300,000 for the fiscal year ending
2 June 30, 2027 are hereby appropriated to the department of health and human services, division of
3 public health services, rural health and primary care section for the purpose set forth in paragraph
4 II(e) of section 3 of this act. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out of any
5 money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

6 VII. Appropriation; Bi-State Primary Care Association sub-recipient contract with a rural
7 residency training at a teaching health center program. The sum of \$500,000 for the fiscal year
8 ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$500,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 are hereby
9 appropriated to the department of health and human services, division of public health services,
10 rural health and primary care section for the purposes set forth in paragraph II(f) of section 3 of this
11 act. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sum out of any money in the treasury not
12 otherwise appropriated.

13 VIII. Appropriation; State Loan Repayment Program. The sum of \$1,000,000 for the fiscal
14 year ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$1,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 are
15 hereby appropriated to the department of health and human services, division of public health
16 services, rural health and primary care section for the state loan repayment program. This
17 appropriation shall be nonlapsing. Of this appropriation, the sums of \$300,000 for the fiscal year
18 ending June 30, 2026 and \$300,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 shall be expended by
19 clinicians in the nursing profession. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out
20 of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

21 IX. Appropriation; Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Credential. The sum of
22 \$203,500 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$203,500 for the fiscal year ending
23 June 30, 2027 are hereby appropriated to the department of health and human services, bureau of
24 children's behavioral health for the purpose set forth in RSA 167:3-1, IV(a)(2). The bureau shall use
25 the funding to support the training of up to 60 clinicians per year of the biennium. The governor is
26 authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out of any money in the treasury not otherwise
27 appropriated.

28 X. Appropriation; Primary Care Workforce Program. The sum of \$115,000 for the fiscal year
29 ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$115,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 are hereby
30 appropriated to the department of health and human services, division of public health services,
31 rural health and primary care section, for an administrator I position for the purpose of
32 administering paragraph I of section 3 of this act. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for
33 said sums out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

34 XI. Appropriation; Primary Care Workforce Program. The sum of \$91,000 for the fiscal year
35 ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$91,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 are hereby
36 appropriated to the department of health and human services, division of public health services,
37 rural health and primary care section, for a compliance coordinator II position for the purpose of

1 administering paragraph VIII of section 4 of this act. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant
2 for said sums out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

3 XII. Appropriation; Primary Care Workforce Program. The sum of \$81,000 for the fiscal
4 year ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$81,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 are
5 hereby appropriated to the department of health and human services, division of public health
6 services, rural health and primary care section, for an administrative assistant I position for the
7 purpose of administering paragraph VIII of section 4 of this act. The governor is authorized to draw
8 a warrant for said sums out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

9 5 Department of Health and Human Services; Medicaid Rate Increases; Appropriation.

10 I. The commissioner of the department of health and human services shall increase
11 Medicaid provider rates by 3 percent in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and an additional 3
12 percent in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027. The commissioner shall make the necessary
13 adjustments to the medical rate setting data book and direct the actuary and managed care
14 organizations to pass through the increased funding to rates.

15 II. There is hereby appropriated to the department of health and human services the sum of
16 \$20,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and the sum of \$20,000,000 for the fiscal year
17 ending June 30, 2027, for the purpose of increasing Medicaid provider rates. The department shall
18 utilize such funds to increase rates pursuant to section 1902(a)(30)(A) of the Social Security Act, to
19 promote efficiency, economy, and quality of care within New Hampshire's Medicaid program. The
20 department may accept and expend any federal funds available for the purposes of this section
21 without the prior approval of the fiscal committee of the general court. The governor is authorized to
22 draw a warrant for said sums out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated. The rate
23 increases shall go into effect no later than January 1, 2026. If feasible, the department shall
24 implement any of the rate increases prior to that date, with priority given to those the commissioner
25 has deemed most critical. For each provider rate increase, the department shall report to the fiscal
26 committee of the general court, by October 1, 2025, the accounting units in the state operating
27 budget to which funds will be or have been allocated, along with the rate increases that will be
28 provided from the funds appropriated.

29 III. There is hereby appropriated to the department of health and human services the sum
30 of \$2,600,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 and the sum of \$2,600,000 for the fiscal year
31 ending June 30, 2027, for the purpose of increasing rates paid to providers of opioid treatment
32 programs. Said amounts are intended to cover the cost of rate increases for both the traditional
33 Medicaid population and granite advantage program population. The department may accept and
34 expend any federal funds available for the purposes of this section without the prior approval of the
35 fiscal committee of the general court. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sums
36 out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

37 6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

SB 244-FN-A- FISCAL NOTE
 AS INTRODUCED

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FISCAL IMPACT:

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	None			
Expenditures*	\$0	\$29,620,500	\$29,770,000	Indeterminable Increase
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>				
Appropriations*	\$0	\$29,620,500	\$29,770,000	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill

*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

METHODOLOGY:

This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its current contract with the Bi-State Primary Care Association’s Recruitment Center for establishment of a “Public-Private Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Hub.” The sum of \$580,000 for FY 2026 and the sum of \$580,000 for FY 2027 are appropriated from the general fund to the Department for this purpose. The Department anticipates these funds would directly pass through to the Bi-State Primary Care Association (BSPCA) to implement the terms and deliverables of the proposed contract amendment, and assumes a contract limit would be included to ensure that the terms of the contract would not exceed the funding appropriated for those activities.

The bill further directs the BSPCA recruitment center to enter into sub recipient contracts to facilitate a number of different workforce initiatives to strengthen the infrastructure needed to sustain and transform community-based primary healthcare services. The bill lists the activities that the sub recipients shall engage in and makes appropriations to fund them. The activities and appropriations include:

- Expand and implement BSPCA recruitment center's national outreach and marketing campaign designed to recruit qualified clinicians to New Hampshire. The sums of

\$250,000 for FY 2026 and \$250,000 for FY 2027 are appropriated from the general fund to the Department for this purpose.

- Collaborate with an area health education center (AHEC) to increase the number of entry-level clinical staff by investing in programs that improve care and access to care, particularly in rural and underserved areas of this state, and to enhance the health and public health workforce in the State. The sum of \$3,100,000 for FY 2026 and \$3,000,000 for FY 2027 are appropriated from the general fund to the Department for this purpose.
- Collaborate with an AHEC to create and expand graduate level nursing mentoring and precepting programs. The sums of \$300,000 for FY 2026 and \$300,000 for SFY 2027 are appropriated from the general fund to the Department for this purpose.
- Collaborate with an AHEC to support the New Hampshire Needs Caregivers Program to promote, recruit, and fund training of up to 500 individuals interested in a career in health care as a licensed nursing assistant. General fund appropriations of \$500,000 for FY 2026 and \$750,000 for SFY 2027 made to the Department for this purpose.
- Expand student loan repayment opportunities for clinicians with bachelors' degrees employed by non-profit health care organizations in exchange for the agreement to work for the organization for 24 months for part-time employees to 36 months for full-time employees. The sums of \$300,000 for FY 2026 and \$300,000 for FY 2027 are appropriated from the general fund to the Department for this purpose.
- Collaborate with a family medicine residency program in rural New Hampshire at a teaching health center program to support the training of family medicine residents in the north country. General fund appropriations of \$500,000 for FY 2026 and \$500,000 for SFY 2027 are made to the Department for this purpose.

The bill makes nonlapsing general fund appropriations of \$1,000,000 in FY 2026 and \$1,000,000 in FY 2027 to the Department's State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), of which \$300,000 in each year be expended by clinicians in the nursing profession.

The bill includes general fund appropriation of \$287,000 in each year to fund an Administrator I, a Compliance Coordinator II, and an Administrative Assistant I position to administer the contracts above and increase the capacity of the Department to administer the additional State Loan Repayment Program contracts. The Department estimates the cost of these positions would be \$279,000 in FY 2026, \$287,000 in FY 2027, and \$297,000 in FY 2028.

The bill provides general fund appropriations of \$20,000,000 in FY 2026 and \$20,000,000 in FY 2027 to the Department for the purpose of increasing Medicaid provider rates. The Department states the bill does not define "provider" and the legislation implies the rate increase would be applied to all Medicaid providers. However, the Department notes the language suggests the Department may prioritize rate increases for services deemed most critical within the appropriated amount.

The bill also provides general fund appropriations of \$203,500 in each year of the biennium to the Department's Bureau of Children's Behavioral Health to support training of up to 60 clinicians in each year of the biennium, and \$2,600,000 in each year of the biennium to increase rates paid to providers of opioid treatment programs. Where applicable, the bill provides that the Department may accept and expend any federal funds available without the prior approval of the fiscal committee of the general court.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of Health and Human Services