

Dear Chairman MacDonald and members of the Committee on Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs,

My name is Ashleigh Shenton. I am a resident physician in my third year of Internal Medicine training at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. I live in Lebanon. During my time living and working in New Hampshire, I have been struck by the significant disparities in health outcomes between my patients based upon socioeconomic status and geography. In other words, a lack of health equity is making some of my patients sicker than they should be. I am therefore writing in opposition to HB392, directing the dissolution of the department of health and human services' office of health equity, department of environmental services' functions for civil rights and environmental justice, and the governor's council on diversity and inclusion.

Social determinants of health such as income, access to transportation, and educational level affect health and wellbeing in a multitude of ways. For example, my co-residents and I have been working on a project evaluating rates of breast and colon cancer screening in the Upper Valley. Significantly fewer people are up-to-date on cancer screenings in lower socioeconomic strata. I have observed similar effects in my own clinic, where factors like decreased ability to afford medications or obtain rides to appointments detrimentally affect patients' health. I therefore believe that health equity is essential in promoting the health and wellbeing of all New Hampshire residents, and the Office of Health Equity is essential in advocating for all of us to be healthy.

Thank you for your time and attention on this important subject.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashleigh Shenton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ashleigh Shenton, MD