

I am writing as a staff member at the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter in support of FN HB 1798 to supply diapers for the first year of life for Medicaid recipients. At the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, which has served the greater Nashua community for 45 years, we distribute diapers every time we have pantry, which is five days a week, and every third Sunday. Clients can get 10 diapers every other day, so essentially a client can get 30 diapers/week, covering about half of what a typical newborn would need in the first year of life. We supply clients with a lot of diapers: in fiscal year 2024, we distributed 11,285 diapers; in 2025, 13,060 diapers.

Babies use a lot of diapers. Newborns use between 8 -12/day, decreasing to between 5 - 8/day as they grow. Depending on how fast the baby grows, in their first year of life babies require between 2,000 and 3,000 diapers.

Changing diapers frequently is necessary to infant health. If babies don't have clean diapers, they are at high risk for painful diaper rashes, urinary tract infections (UTIs) and serious bacterial or viral infections like Hepatitis A. Lengthy exposure to wetness and bacteria damages the skin and weakens the immune system, creating stress and impacting brain development.

Diapering a baby is expensive. Diapers range from 10 cents to 74 cents apiece, depending on the brand. This adds up to \$24 - \$270/month – or between \$260 - \$3,200 first year.

We distribute diapers because people cannot purchase them using SNAP. Diapers are a significant expense for everyone, but especially for those on an already tight budget. The Soup Kitchen does not purchase diapers; we rely on in-kind donations to have diapers to distribute; if we run out of diapers, so do our clients.

Babies need diapers, so we urge you to support HB1798, supplying diapers under the state Medicaid plan.

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