Minutes

Health and Human Services Oversight Committee

Regular Meeting: Friday, December 19, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Granite Place 158

Present: Representatives Pearson, Mooney, Seaworth, LaMontagne and Weber, and Senators Rosenwald and Gray.

Approval of Minutes: The draft minutes of the November 21, 2025 meeting were duly moved, seconded and approved as drafted.

DHHS Commissioners Report: Associate Commissioner Patricia Tilley presented the commissioner's report.

Rural Health Care Transformation Grant: We are still waiting to hear about the Rural Health Transformation Grant. There was only one question and lots of positive feedback about the application as submitted. The Department will submit an "up to" proposal to Fiscal for approval, and they are planning for staffing as they want to get them onboard in January. They are working on Requests for Proposals so they can get them posted as soon as possible.

New YDC Facility Update: The facility is now on time; the roof and masonry are done. The schedule is for substantive work to be completed by August, with the punch list completed in the fall, and move in scheduled for January 2027. There are challenges with moving a secure facility for minors. Senator Rosenwald asked about a playground, which was not in the original proposal. A: It was in the design and intended all along. It is ready to go now, having been added back in as the money became available.

Representative Mooney asked about the Rural Health Funds. A: Are these 100% federal funds? Yes. Senator Rosenwald asked if we are applying for the entire amount for this biennium, or for the full ten years? A: We have applied for funding for two years and will need to re-apply in two years or maybe 18 months. The spending for subsequent years will depend on the track record in yeas 1 and 2. We must spend all of the first tranche of funds withing the targeted time period, and it often takes a year from inception to the issuance of contracts.

Study Committee on Palliative and Hospice Care: Medicaid Director Henry Lipman presented about the SB 248 study committee on palliative and hospice care. The committee findings talk about how to help providers and individuals differentiate between palliative and hospice care. Unlike hospice care, receipt of palliative care does not preclude the receipt of curative care as well. The Department sees its mission as working with community organizations to provide education for the community. The palliative care waiver is similar to the hospice care waiver,

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but again there is a need to develop materials distinguishing between the different programs. The Hospital Association and Home Health and Hospice are all willing to be part of the solution.

Representative Pearson noted that the committee did not come up with a recommendation for future legislation, but that might come from individual members.

Representative Weber asked about the time frame for Medicaid authorizations. They are making progress through the backlog of redeterminations after the special COVID rules expired. The Commissioner has made this a high priority, meeting with the NH Health Care Association and the counties. There has been some temporary staffing to work down the lateness, and they are working on the parts of the process that cause time lags. There are compatibility issues between assets and liabilities, and trusts, etc. UNH Law School is working to help streamline the key time-consumers. There is a training process this month for a team coming on in January, which will be a help.

We work well with the income determinations. The issue is the long-term care services and supports. The COGE report suggests using more electronic means to help with the determinations. There is still a need to ask for proofs of different things, especially if there were asset transfers in order to qualify for Medicaid. Families have a hard time producing the required documents—the five-year lookback period is a challenge. They are trying to strike the right balance. Senator Rosenwald asked about changes to the lookback statutes. Is the Department thinking that the legislature might need to take further action to enable the streamlining of the process? A: This is why the Department is working with UNH Law School. Sometimes we may be overshooting with respect to documentation of transfers not actually related to an asset transfer. There is an asset verification system which relies on commonly used reliable sources. If that system clears the transfers, we should be able to rely on it. The need is to get just enough information, without having to dig even further. There is a continuous review of how they are looking at these cases.

Representative MacDonald arrived and took his seat.

Tuition Waiver for Children in State Foster Care or Guardianship: Robert Rodler, Administrator for the Division of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) presented the written update on the tuition waiver program. This was a good year. There were 85 applicants. 65 received a tuition waiver—35 at UNH and 30 at the Community Colleges. On Page 2, the new and continuing numbers need revision, so a revised report will be issued. At the end of the report is an ongoing chart going back to 2008, and details of what happened with the applicants. They are continuing to work on enhancing graduation rates. Senator Gray said he wants this to be a separate appropriation in the budget and identified that way, so the legislature is accountable for a separate line item. He is looking for that in the next year's budget, and is laying the

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groundwork now. He wants people to know where it stands and wants to make it clear to members of the House that when money is taken away, we need to know where it is taken away from, so people will know up front who to direct the phone calls to.

Representative MacDonald asked about the maximum number of slots. A: There are 70 slots—35 for each institution. The WMUR NH Chronical Home for the Holidays program episode tonight will be on this subject. Representative LaMontagne asked about extended foster care, and how far the Division goes to make former foster children aware of the program. A: They work on it on the front end, and also reach out to former students. There is a survey at ages 17, 19 and 21, and aftercare is available through age 26. Representative Weber noted that the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are also mandated to talk with youth in care as well. Administrator Rosen said that some of the youth come forward to take part in the program right at age 18, but some are not ready yet and start later. Representative Pearson asked how many of the youths enter the military? A: A few do, but some are turned down because of juvenile records.

New Hampshire Health Officers Association Annual Report: Wayne Whitford, President of the Health Officers Association, and Sophia L. Johnson, Administrator, Bureau of Prevention Services in the Division of Public Health, presented a summary of the report to the committee; the full report was provided by email. The Health Officers may be volunteers or part- or full-time municipal employees. Some have about nine hours a week to devote to the job. Small towns have a hard time finding volunteers. The responsibility devolves onto the Selectboard if the position is vacant. The responsibilities were reviewed. Orientation and continuous training are provided. Support consists of training; a listserv and technical assistance is available. The focus is on education, technical services, and networking between Health Officers. Municipal budgets for Health Officers are very limited. They advocate partnering with other institutions. Representative Pearson asked how to find out who the Health Officers are? A: The towns nominate them and then the Department manages the appointing, which can be looked up on a forward-facing document on the Department's web site. Representative Woods asked what happens when there is a problem and there is no Health Officer. A: The fallback is that DHHS provide options—the town can work with an adjacent town and share a Health Officer for a limited time. The Department tries to connect them.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 m. The next meeting will be Friday, January 23, at 9:30 pm, at Granite Place Room 158.

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Lucy Weber, Clerk.

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