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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NH HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS REAUTHORIZATION

CONCORD, NH – March 3, 2016 -- Bi-State Primary Care Association applauds the House Finance Committee on their vote of 18-8 in favor of HB1696, which reauthorizes the NH Health Protection Program. This vote is another step forward to continued health coverage for the 48,000 individuals who have access to primary and preventive care that keeps them healthy, working, and out of costlier emergency services.

The NH Health Protection Program is a unique, New Hampshire solution to our health care crisis and continues to be a program with bipartisan support because of its success and its financial benefits. The federal government will pay 100 percent of the costs of the Health Protection Program from 2014-16. In 2017, the state share of the program will be 5 percent, with the federal government contributing 95 percent to the program, gradually decreasing to 90 percent by 2020.

New Hampshire's proposed legislation terminates the program should the federal government change its financial contribution. The hospitals and insurers in our state have agreed to pay the state's portion of the program because they have seen first-hand how successful the program is. It is anticipated that more than \$870 million will flow through New Hampshire's economy as a result of reauthorization.

As the full House meets to vote on this bill next week, we urge legislators to follow the recommendations of both the Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs and Finance committees and vote to support this critical program. While the financial benefits are confirmed, let's not forget about the people behind it. People who are accessing primary care, some for the first time in their adult lives, and people who are making their way out of the disease of addiction due to access to treatment and recovery services.

"We know that this program is making a major impact on our health centers' reductions in uncompensated care," said Tess Stack Kuenning, CEO of Bi-State Primary Care Association. "The NH Health Protection Program makes policy and fiscal sense. The committees have spoken and the legislature should stand behind those recommendations for the 48,000 people whose lives depend on it."