



February 1, 2023

Senator Regina Birdsell, Chair  
Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 101  
33 N. State Street  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: [SB 86](#) relative to health care workforce development and making appropriations therefor

Dear Chairwoman Birdsell and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Stephanie Pagliuca, and I am the Senior Director of Workforce Development and Recruitment with Bi-State Primary Care Association. Bi-State is a nonprofit organization focused on advancing access to comprehensive primary care and preventive services for all, with special emphasis on those most in need in New Hampshire and Vermont. Bi-State's members include community health centers, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), Free and Referral Clinics, New Hampshire Area Health Education Center programs, networks, and consortia. Today, Bi-State represents 26 member organizations that provide comprehensive primary care services to over 312,000 patients at 162 locations.

Since 1994, Bi-State has run the state's only non-profit Recruitment Center to help communities attract and recruit primary care physicians, dentists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and masters-level behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment providers. The Recruitment Center's services are available to any practice in the state although we specialize in recruitment to practices that serve the needs of medically underserved areas and populations. Our services have helped 100+ organizations across the state to recruit more than 630 clinicians. We regularly assist rural hospitals, community health centers, community mental health centers, and private practices with their recruitment needs.

The Recruitment Center conducts national marketing and outreach to health professionals in training and in practice outside of New Hampshire to promote opportunities to practice here. Our team helps health professionals who are considering working in New Hampshire to identify a practice location and community where their professional and personal interests can be met.

Even before the pandemic New Hampshire had to compete nationally for a pool of health professionals to provide essential primary care services to our residents. There are not enough of these critical providers being trained in New Hampshire to meet the needs across the state. In fact, most of the training programs we have are centered in larger communities in southern New Hampshire which does not offer the students any training in smaller practices and rural communities where their services are needed after they graduate.

Speaking from my 29 years of experience at the Recruitment Center, I am pleased that Senate Bill 86 is being considered by the New Hampshire legislature because it contains effective approaches to supporting our state's current workforce and strengthens our workforce pipeline in the long-term. It is essential that New Hampshire has these solutions in place to address the pressures from workforce shortages in the health care industry, which started before the pandemic, but have been amplified to a level of crisis. These staffing shortages, which now extend across both clinical and non-clinical positions, severely limit health care organizations' ability to meet the needs of their patients, families, and communities they serve.

The investments proposed in SB 86 include: provisions for certification and reimbursement of Community Health Workers; funding for the NH Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) to increase the number of entry-level clinical staff and career ladder trainings; and residency and advanced training programs for rural family medicine physicians and advanced practice registered nurses. Today, you will hear from subject matter experts

who will discuss why these investments in pipeline programs are necessary, and critical to ensure continued access to primary and preventive health care services and protect the lives of Granite Staters.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our experience in recruiting and retaining health professionals for the state. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Pagliuca".

Stephanie Pagliuca  
Senior Director of Workforce Development and Recruitment  
Bi-State Primary Care Association  
[spagliuca@bistatepca.org](mailto:spagliuca@bistatepca.org)