

525 Clinton Street  
Bow, NH 03304  
Voice: 603-228-2830  
Fax: 603-228-2464



61 Elm Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
Voice: 802-229-0002  
Fax: 802-223-2336

April 4, 2023

House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee  
Legislative Office Building Room 205  
33 N. State Street  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 263 extending the New Hampshire granite advantage health care program and reestablishing the commission to evaluate the effectiveness and future of the New Hampshire granite advantage health care program

Dear Chairman MacDonald and Members of the House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee:

Bi-State Primary Care Association (Bi-State) and our members write to you today in strong support of SB 263 to permanently reauthorize the Granite Advantage Health Care Program during the 2023 legislative session.

Bi-State is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, formed by two health and social service leaders in 1986 to advance 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 represents 26 member organizations across both states that provide comprehensive primary care services to over 312,000 patients at 162 locations. Our members include federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), Free and Referral Clinics, New Hampshire Area Health Education Center programs, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, networks, and consortia. New Hampshire's 11 community health centers serve approximately 103,000 patients at locations across the state, including in those districts represented by the members of this esteemed committee.

Since its inception almost ten years ago, the Granite Advantage Health Care Program has provided over 219,000 adults with vital health care coverage, including preventative and primary care, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and diagnoses and treatment for diabetes, hypertension, and cancer. This program has been instrumental in expanding the state's substance use and mental health treatment capacity. For example, since the expansion of this program, the number of FQHC patients accessing substance use disorder services in New Hampshire has increased by 443%, and the number of patients receiving mental health treatment has increased by 100%. This service expansion is due in large part to the existence of the Granite Advantage Health Care Program.

The permanent reauthorization Medicaid Expansion, rather than reauthorization for two years or five years, is also essential for purposes of business planning, financial stability, and continuity of care at FQHCs. Like any business, FQHCs conduct long-term financial planning. The incremental reauthorization of Medicaid causes undue financial stress; the inability for the FQHCs to plan programmatic staffing long term; and undue stress on their employees whose paychecks are supported by Medicaid reimbursement. Since 2014, the number of health center staff has grown from 701.76 employees to

1,052.79 full-time equivalents (FTEs). The permanent reauthorization of Medicaid will allow the FQHCs to better plan their programmatic and staffing structures, and potentially grow the number of Granite Staters employed in the health care field.

On behalf our Bi-State and our members, thank you for this opportunity to demonstrate our support for this critical program in preserving health care coverage for tens of thousands of people in need. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information at [gmaheras@bistatepca.org](mailto:gmaheras@bistatepca.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'gma', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Georgia J. Maheras, Esq.  
Senior Vice President of Policy and Strategy  
Bi-State Primary Care Association  
[gmaheras@bistatepca.org](mailto:gmaheras@bistatepca.org)