



April 10, 2024

Representative Wayne MacDonald, Chairman
House Health, Human Services, and Elderly Affairs Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 205-207
33 N. State Street Concord, NH 03301

RE: [SB 403](#) relative to health care workforce investments

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

My name is Kristine Stoddard, and I am the Senior Director of New Hampshire Public Policy at Bi-State Primary Care Association. I am pleased to testify in support of SB 403 and respectfully request the committee pass this bill that is critical to New Hampshire's ability to attract, retain and grow the next generation of health professionals for our state.

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 Primary Care Association is a non-profit organization that works to expand access to primary and preventive care for all New Hampshire residents. Bi-State's members include community health centers, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), New Hampshire Area Health Education Center programs, clinics for the uninsured, networks, and consortia. Today, Bi-State represents 11 community health centers in New Hampshire that provide comprehensive primary care services to over 100,000 patients, including approximately 20,000 children.

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 675 clinicians. We regularly assist rural hospitals, community health centers, community mental health centers, and private practices with their recruitment needs.

SB 403 creates a pathway to licensure for a critical member of integrated health care teams: community health workers. According to the American Public Health Association, community health workers are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the communities they serve. They often serve as the link between health and social services and community members. New Hampshire's CHWs work to facilitate access to health care services and non-medical services, including mortgage and utility assistance. They help community members increase their knowledge of our health care system and conduct outreach, social support, and patient advocacy. Currently, health care organizations employing CHWs in the Granite State must rely on intermittent grant funding to support the work of CHWs. SB 403 creates a sustainable source of funding for CHWs through certification because their services will then become reimbursable by insurance companies.

For these reasons, we ask that you recommend SB 403 ought to pass.

Thank you,

Kristine E. Stoddard, Esq.
Director of NH Public Policy
603-228-2830, ext. 113
kstoddard@bistatepca.org