HB 1217: AN ACT amending the certification requirements for school nurses

History/Context:
There are approximately 500 school nurses in New Hampshire, serving 618 public and private schools. The role of the professional school nurse is currently defined by New Hampshire School Nurse Certification Law (RSA 200:29, II), with the current rules approved by JLCAR (Ed 306.12). Certification ensures a professional level of qualification for the position of school nurse, which will support a minimal standard of care for students with acute and chronic health needs in school. HB 1217 amends the requirement for certification. New Hampshire school nurses are members of a unique discipline of professional nursing and are often the sole healthcare providers in their districts. They are both an independent clinician and manager of school health services. It is imperative that school nurses are prepared for and practice at the same level as their colleagues, such as teachers who are certified, as well as other adjunct therapists who are prepared with Masters Degrees, for example occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech therapists. (Prepared by Pamela DiNapoli, PhD, RN, CNL)

NHNA’s Commission on Government Affairs is opposed to the passage of HB 1217.

A public hearing on this bill was held on January 17, 2018, attended by Joan Widmer, Nurse Executive Director of NHNA.

On February 22, 2018 the House passed this bill and it moved to the Senate for consideration.

Pam DiNapoli, Chair Commission on Government Affairs, testified in opposition to this bill at the public hearing of the Senate Committee on Education held on March 20, 2018.

On April 3, 2018 the Senate Committee on Education voted this bill ought to pass. NHNA is speaking with key Senators to work to oppose this bill when it comes to the full Senate for a vote.

On April 12, 2018 this bill failed to pass in the Senate, it was killed. Thank you to Pam DiNapoli, Chair of the Commission on Government Affairs, for her tireless work in opposition to this bill.