HB 719: Establishing the Position of School Nurse Coordinator

Title/Introduction: AN ACT establishing the position of school nurse coordinator in the department of education and making an appropriation therefor. HB 719 seeks to establish the position of School Nurse Coordinator in the N.H. Department of Education and appropriate funding for such.

History/Context: This position of resource and coordination has been in place under various titles within the Department of Education. It has been funded through grants for HIV Education, Drug and Alcohol, and Special Education. The position has gone unfilled when grant funding has ended. The proposed legislation will provide a permanent position. School Nurses throughout the State have relied on the expertise of the Department of Education’s School Nurse Coordinator until 2010 when funding was withdrawn. In 2015, advocacy efforts led to a short-term, grant-funded reinstatement; however, the position of School Nursing Coordinator has been vacant since 2017.

New Hampshire School Nurses Association strongly supports HB 719.

Pros:

- This legislation will provide a resource who can synchronize the legal and practice parameters of the Board of Nursing, Board of Pharmacy, Board of Medicine, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Education.
- This legislation will provide a permanent position, within the Department of Education, allowing for continued provision for a resource for School Nurses, administrators, parents, and community members on challenging practice and legal issues, state protocols, best practice recommendations and guidance on matters of policy and procedure.
- This legislation will provide for a school health voice with stakeholders including school administrators, school board members, physicians, members of the mental and behavioral health community, and public health officials.

Cons:

- Fiscal expenditure of State budget (with an estimated general fund appropriation of $87,000 in Fiscal Year 2020 and $87,000 in Fiscal Year 2021).
- Continued lack of coordination of the legal parameters directing school health care providers.
- There will continue to be no resource for school nurses, teachers, administrators, parents, or community members to respond to their questions and concerns about specific health related issues in the school setting.

Committee: House Education Committee

Position of CGA: Supports HB 719

Click here to access HB 719 on the NH General Court website.

A hearing on HB 719 was held by the House Education Committee on January 30, 2019. NHNA signed-in in support of this bill. Paula MacKinnon, Nancy Wells and Carla Smith, members of NHNA’s Legislative Advocacy Council testified in support of this bill. Executive session was held on 02-12-19. The House Education Committee voted (13:6) ought to pass with amendment #2019-0268h.

This bill Passed with Amendment (198-146) in the House on 02-27-19.

This bill was introduced to the Senate on 03-14-19 and referred to the Senate Education & Workforce Development Committee. A hearing of the Senate E&WD Committee was held on 04-02-19. The E&WD Committee voted (5:0) ought to pass with amendment (#2019-1447s). Senator Ruth Ward wrote on behalf of the Committee: "This bill establishes the position of School Nurses Coordinator in the Department of Education be be staffed by a registered nurse with appropriate experience and education. The role, as it had existed historically, would be the central role to coordinate resources for school nurses, policy makers, administrators and others as relates to student health and wellness. This legislation seeks to return a position that had existed in New Hampshire from 1919 to 2010." Senate E&WF Committee voted ought to pass with amendment (#2019-1447s) on 04-18-19. The full Senate voted ought to pass on 05-02-19; then Senator Dan Feltes moved Laid on the Table. HB 719 contains a fiscal note, so it is likely this motion was made to include the financial components of the bill into the budget bill.

- Bill states that parents “sign a form”, Electronic health records used throughout health care, so form would need to include integration in EMRs.


Committee: House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs

Position of the CGA: Supports the intent of HB 555 recognizing of the above pros, cons and complexities.

Click here to access HB 555 on the NH General Court website.

The House HHS&EA Committee held a hearing on this bill on January 22, 2019. NHNA attended this hearing. Executive session of HHS&EA was held on 2-12-19. The House HHS&EA Committee voted (19-1) Inexpedient to Legislate.