Title/Introduction: SB 308: AN ACT relative to the health care workforce and making an appropriation therefor. To best tackle the health care workforce challenges in 2019, this legislative package that combines key policy and budget topics in a single bill to be considered as one proposal.

History/Context: In the 2018 legislative session, more than 50 bills were filed to address workforce shortages. These ranged from regulatory reform, criminal background checks, and licensing reciprocity, to increased funding for the State Loan Repayment Program. Most of these bills did not pass because the conversations, while earnest, were unfocused. More importantly, none of the bills addressed New Hampshire’s health care workforce challenges systematically.

Proposed language as a SB may include:

1. Health Care Pipeline Investments: will create targeted scholarships with service commitments and career advancement programs designed to attract and retain the health care workforce.
2. Advanced Training Programs: An investment in establishing accredited residency/fellowship programs will help our state compete to attract and retain these professionals to establish and maintain their careers in the state.
3. Investment in the State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP): investing $5 million in the next biennium that will enable DHHS to expand eligible clinician types, generate over 200 contracts with clinicians, add an additional FTE to assist in managing the contracts, and better position health care providers to recruit and retain clinicians in medically underserved areas across the state.
4. Investment in Medicaid providers: the state will increase reimbursement rates by 5% in 2020 and by 7% increase in 2021 for all Medicaid providers.
5. Administrative relief: a process to eliminate unnecessary and/or duplicative administrative requirements
6. Spend down: Reforming the system to adjust the income requirements
7. Background checks: Directing and supporting the Department of Safety in implementation of an online background check system
8. Telehealth: Expands the types of clinicians and facilities eligible to offer telehealth to Medicaid enrollees, reducing the regulatory burdens associated with telehealth, and creating incentives for capital investments needed for non-profit providers.

Pros:

- Build a strong consensus in both state government and the legislature to put health care workforce issues at the top of the 2019 legislative agenda.
Cons:

- Cost


Committee: Senate Executive Departments and Administration

Position of the CGA: Joins in support of this bill with New Futures and other health care associations.

Click here to access SB 308 on the NH General Court website.

A hearing of the Senate Executive Departments & Administration Committee was held for 02-13-19. NHNA testified at this hearing and signed-in in support of this bill. The was no opposition testimony at this hearing. The Senate ED&A Committee voted this bill Ought to Pass with Amendment (#2019-0870s). This amendment makes changes to the survey process at license renewal and creates a provision for online criminal background checks, among other changes. This bill voted Ought to Pass with Amendment by full Senate on 03-14-19 and then referred to Finance Rule 4-5. The Senate Finance Committee voted Ought to Pass with Amendment (#2019-1156s) on 03-20-19. Sen. D'Allesandro Moved Laid on Table. This is a planned moved to incorporate this bill into the budget.

A rally in support of SB 308 was held on the State House Lawn on Monday 05-06-19, NHNA attended this rally with over representatives for over 40 health care organizations (see photo gallery for photos of this event).