



newfutures 

SOLVING PROBLEMS THROUGH POLICY CHANGE

2023
Annual
Report



We solve problems through **policy change.**

For over 25 years, New Futures has provided nonpartisan, evidence-based solutions to New Hampshire's health challenges. We work to build bridges among policy makers and secure the passage of laws that improve access to childcare, health insurance, substance use treatment, and prevention programming. Through policy change we can ensure that social service programs and statewide systems work for everyone—especially the populations they are designed to serve.



Letter from The President

Over the course of the last year, New Futures has taken time to reflect on our organization's identity, our values, and our approach to bringing about change for the people of New Hampshire. In this report, you'll see the result of this effort—our new logo, our long-term strategic goals, and our guiding motto:

"We solve problems through policy change."

Within these pages, you'll also see this motto come to life. You'll learn about our policy issues, our recent accomplishments, and the continued challenges we must work to address.

While the framing looks different, our values and way of doing things remain the same.

- ▶ **We listen** to Granite Staters to better understand the issues affecting their health and well-being.
- ▶ **We equip** individuals with lived experience with training and support to share their experiences with policymakers.
- ▶ **We partner** with other statewide organizations to build strong coalitions.
- ▶ **We support** lawmakers, providing them with expert guidance and evidence-based data to support the creation of impactful policies.

Using this theory of change we can solve issues like a lack of affordable child care; we can help find better placements for children suffering with mental illness boarded in emergency rooms; we can create better access to treatment for substance use disorders; we can prevent substance use disorders before they even begin by investing in policies that support prevention; and so much more.

But we cannot do this work without the partnership and support from individuals like you. We hope you will join us this coming year as we continue working on the critical issues highlighted in this annual report.

We know, together, we can solve these problems through policy change.

Michele D Merritt



Michele Merritt has overall leadership and management responsibility for New Futures.

Mission

New Futures works to improve the health and well-being of all Granite Staters through public policy change and civic empowerment.

Vision

New Futures envisions communities where public policies allow all New Hampshire residents equitable opportunities to live, work, and thrive.

Values

[HOW WE BUILD TRUST]

- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Expertise
- ▶ Partnership
- ▶ Inclusion
- ▶ Respect



Strategic Goals

IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL NEW HAMPSHIRE RESIDENTS



Be a Trusted Leader and Expert

- ▶ Provide strategic, data-driven resources and policy expertise
- ▶ Advance organizational priorities and policy positions informed by impacted stakeholders
- ▶ Provide policymakers and community leaders with tools and support needed to advance policy change



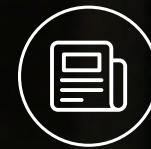
Build Civic Leadership

- ▶ Educate, support and mobilize impacted individuals to engage in the New Hampshire legislative process
- ▶ Leverage internal tools and expertise to improve the effectiveness of grassroots engagement efforts
- ▶ Build and maintain strong community relationships based upon mutual respect and integrity



Increase Public Awareness

- ▶ Provide accurate, timely and compelling communications to stakeholders
- ▶ Utilize communications tools and strategic expertise to elevate issues and amplify voices
- ▶ Strengthen recognition of our work and impact



Advance Impactful Policy

- ▶ Build robust coalitions to advance targeted policy initiatives
- ▶ Develop comprehensive and strategic issue-based campaign plans
- ▶ Support policymakers in the research and drafting of legislation
- ▶ Leverage internal capacity in support of shared coalition priorities



Grow Resources

- ▶ Build philanthropic partnerships to advance our work
- ▶ Expand support offerings for partner organizations



Embrace Learning

- ▶ Regularly evaluate the impact of our programs
- ▶ Provide ongoing opportunities for the learning and growth of our staff, board and volunteers



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Strengthening families and mitigating adverse childhood experiences.



Meet Kristen Evans

A working mom doing her best to provide for her family. Together, Kristen and her husband Seth have a blended family that includes two sons—Jayden, 14; Logan, 10; and daughter Emersyn, who turned three in July.

Like so many other New Hampshire Families, the soaring costs of child care have left the Evanses struggling to make ends meet.

“We struggle every single day to provide for our family,” said Kristen, who works full-time as a case worker for OUR PLACE, a program of Catholic Charities NH. Her husband works for a small shipping and receiving company. “Our savings are gone. We are constantly choosing between paying rent or paying for child care.”

For many working parents like Kristen and her husband, the high price of child care has been a constant hardship. To make matters worse, the Evans family qualified for the New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship when Emersyn was first enrolled at six months old but lost eligibility eight months later when a slight increase in household income pushed them just over the qualifying limit. The increase, which equated to about \$600 per month in SNAP benefits, ultimately cost the family nearly \$300 per week in child care expenses.

The loss of child care scholarship support was devastating for the Evanses, leaving them on the edge of financial ruin. But thanks to Kristen, and the dozens of advocates and partner organizations who acted in support of the Child Care for NH Working Families Act, there is hope on the horizon. This past year New Futures led a successful effort to secure historic state investments in child care, including \$45.5 million to provide direct relief to low-wage working families through child care scholarships—a 54.7 percent increase—and \$15 million to support the child care workforce through recruitment and retention initiatives.

In addition, New Futures also championed expanded access to the New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship program, meaning the Evans family will once again qualify for support once the new guidelines go into place.

“Receiving the Child Care Scholarship again would mean so much for our family,” said Kristen. “We’d be able to catch up. We could finally start saving for a house.”

What’s Next

There’s still more to do to improve access to child care in New Hampshire, like:

- ▶ Increasing awareness and access to New Hampshire Child Care Scholarships
- ▶ Investing in state-funded, mixed-delivery universal pre-kindergarten
- ▶ Supporting the retention and recruitment of child care workers

CHILD CARE STATISTICS

▪ **\$14,425**

the average annual cost of child care for one infant

▪ **61%**

of NH moms have missed work or not taken a job because of a lack of child care

▪ **93%**

of unemployed NH moms cite child care as the reason they aren’t able to return to work; the highest of any New England state and 30% higher than the regional average



CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Supporting a comprehensive system of care for children and families.



New Hampshire's ER Boarding Crisis

On a cool spring night in mid-May, 22 children sat in hospital emergency rooms across New Hampshire waiting for inpatient psychiatric care. The youngest was just six years old.

Unable to access mental health services in their home communities, these children and their families turned to hospitals to help them in their time of crisis. But, with no psychiatric beds available, they were left to wait in emergency rooms for days or weeks on end.

Though the numbers have dwindled in the months since, these children are victims of New Hampshire's emergency room boarding crisis.

New Futures has spent years working with impacted families and strategic partners to address this problem, playing a critical role in helping the State to establish a System of Care to serve children with mental health needs in their home communities. With the successful roll out of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the establishment of a statewide mobile crisis response, more mental health emergencies can be successfully triaged at home and in communities, before families get caught in hospital or criminal justice systems.

Still, the ongoing presence of children waiting in hospital emergency rooms shows how much work is left to do and highlights the need for permanent state investment in these critical programs.

New Futures is prepared to continue its fight to strengthen New Hampshire's children's behavioral health system, working with the legislature to secure continued funding for behavioral health services across the treatment system, with a targeted focus on supporting our 988/mobile crisis system and adequate supports for children in school.

Together with the continued growth of the System of Care, these efforts will help New Hampshire to overcome the emergency room boarding crisis and ensure that our children have access to the mental health care they need, where and when they need it.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STATISTICS

▪ **1 in 5**

children in New Hampshire has a diagnosable mental illness

▪ **14**

children on average were boarding in NH hospital emergency rooms every day in 2022

▪ **33**

The greatest number of children waiting at one time for an inpatient psychiatric bed in 2022



HEALTH

Ensuring access
to quality, affordable
health care.



Dylan's story

Medicaid Expansion was there for Dylan Knowles right when he needed it most.

A successful student and athlete, Dylan tried alcohol for the first time in high school. Within a year, he had moved on from alcohol to marijuana and ultimately to prescription drugs. He dropped out of school, lost his college scholarships and was facing criminal charges. "I kind of fell off a cliff," Dylan told lawmakers at an April hearing of the N.H. House of Representatives' Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee.

But, after struggling to overcome his addiction for several years, Dylan was able to enter an inpatient treatment program and find the road to recovery, using health insurance coverage provided through Medicaid Expansion.

"(Medicaid got me through) partial hospitalization, detox, and being on life support when I overdosed," Knowles told the rapt audience at the April 4 hearing. "I only sit before you today because I was provided a service that I definitely couldn't have afforded myself."

Since its inception in 2014, Medicaid Expansion, also known as the Granite Advantage Health Care Plan, has helped nearly 220,000 low-income Granite Staters access needed health care. In 2022 alone, the program connected more than 8,500 Granite Staters to substance use treatment; more than 25,000 used Medicaid expansion to access emergency care; nearly 30,000 accessed mental health treatment; and more than 63,000 used it for pharmacy services.

Following a year-long campaign led by New Futures and other partners, the legislature voted this year on a seven-year reauthorization of Medicaid Expansion, preserving this critical health resource for Granite Staters through 2030.

"(Medicaid Expansion) works. It works really well. This is not speculation, this is not a guess," said Dylan, who now operates several recovery homes for individuals in recovery from substance use disorder.

"People come in with a lot of conditions. Then after a year or so (on Medicaid) they make really good money, pay really good taxes. They're only alive and able to do this because of that really important stepping stone."

Program projected to return

\$438.7 Million

this fiscal year to support New Hampshire's health care system

MEDICAID EXPANSION STATISTICS

▪ **219,000**

individuals served since program launched in 2014

▪ **67,833**

individuals enrolled as of June 30, 2023

▪ **29,941**

used program to access mental health treatment in FY2022

▪ **25,606**

people used program to access emergency care in FY2022

▪ **8,645**

people used program to access substance use treatment in FY2022

“...I only sit before you today because I was provided a service that I definitely couldn't have afforded myself.”

— DYLAN KNOWLES



SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

Addressing stigma and discrimination in care for those struggling with addiction.

Strengthening oversight

The groundbreaking podcast series *The 13th Step* by N.H. Public Radio reveals a well-documented phenomenon within addiction recovery spaces: the “13th Step” describes a situation where an individual in long-term recovery exploits, or otherwise takes advantage of, someone in early recovery.

This inappropriate and predatory behavior capitalizes on the vulnerability of newcomers, threatening their safety and sobriety.

New Hampshire’s treatment and recovery system is not immune to the 13th Step, as the heartbreaking stories of survivors in NHPR’s podcast make abundantly clear.

“You’re so vulnerable. You’re so unwell. And the things that drive people to addiction are because you have such chips on your shoulder,” said one woman, describing her early recovery and the prevalence of 13th Stepping. “You’re so insecure. You feel like you’re just maladjusted to life, and all you want to do is just be a normal person and fill this gaping hole that you feel like is inside of you. And if it’s not through the drugs or the alcohol, sometimes it’s through the attention of the opposite sex. And that’s why they have a lot of these unwritten, you know, but—rules where they say no dating within the first year of your recovery. It’s because it’s so notorious, and it’s so bad.”

“The fact that we have a name for it is just disgusting, right?”

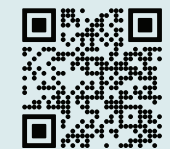
But 13th Stepping is not limited to inappropriate relationships—it extends to any predatory behavior. As the podcast highlights, it also clearly exists in some treatment spaces, manifested in the purposeful act of taking advantage of patients financially—like admitting patients to a treatment program with sub-standard care, rendering services by unqualified or unlicensed individuals, ignoring treatment best practices, or, in the worst cases, crossing patient-provider boundaries.

However, there are opportunities to combat this troubling dynamic. In New Hampshire, there is no central registry or certification of provider organizations, and, outside of state contracting, state administrators are unable to track who is operating in the state and what quality of service they are providing. Furthermore, no confidential reporting mechanism is available for victims or employees, who experience or witness predatory behavior or practices within treatment facilities. These are things we have the power to change.

What’s Next

Following the revelations of *The 13th Step*, New Futures is working with partner organizations to explore these and other opportunities to strengthen oversight and protect patients from harm.

RESOURCE INFORMATION



This podcast is a production of the Document team at New Hampshire Public Radio, and received support from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.

“The most vulnerable an addict can be is in new sobriety because all those emotions and vulnerabilities they have that they’ve been numbing with drugs and alcohol for years is now stripped away. It’s like in the army—if someone went out with no protection.”

— WOMAN IN THE FIRST EPISODE OF *THE 13TH STEP*, DESCRIBING HER EARLY RECOVERY



PUBLIC HEALTH

Protecting
New Hampshire's
public health
system.



Safer homes for New Hampshire children

Forty-five years after lead-based paints were banned in residential buildings, over 42,000 New Hampshire children are still living in homes that contain harmful levels of lead.

In 1978, the Granite State joined the rest of the country in curbing the use of lead paint, which is known to cause developmental delays, cognitive deficits, learning disabilities, and behavior challenges if ingested by children. But, with some of the nation's oldest housing, more than half of the state's 644,000 housing units pre-date the 1978 ban and many still have lead paint hazards.

To help address this concern, New Futures helped pass a law in 2018 that mandated lead testing for 1- and 2-year-old children and lowered the action level for required intervention by the N.H. Department of Health and Human Services. Still, since the start of the COVID pandemic, New Hampshire has seen a 25 percent drop in the number of children tested for blood lead levels and pediatric lead testing rates are the lowest they have been since 2017.

Even with this limited testing, the number of children with elevated blood lead levels is steadily increasing and reached 467 in 2021.

"This dramatic drop in testing rates is alarming," officials from the state's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program wrote in a data brief released in January. "... routine testing of children at age one and again, a second test, at age two, is critical to identifying those with elevated blood lead levels, connecting them with key services to mitigate lead's harmful effects on their developing brains."


This data goes to show that, nearly 50 years after banning the use of lead paint in homes, lead poisoning remains an urgent hazard in New Hampshire, and there is much work left to do. New Futures is hard at work connecting with community advocates and partner organizations to ensure access to lead testing of properties, full and adequate insurance coverage for blood level testing of children, and needed support for homeowners to remediate lead in their homes.

LEAD STATISTICS

Only **45%** of NH one- and two-year-olds on Medicaid were tested for lead in 2021

There has been an **18%** increase of children with elevated lead levels

250,000+ More than half of New Hampshire's stock (250,000+ homes), were constructed prior to the banning of lead paint in 1978



ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Preventing
substance use
through community
education and
regulatory strategies.



Building relationships

Evidence shows that the most cost-effective way to turn the tide on the addiction epidemic is to prevent substance misuse from ever occurring in the first place. And yet, in New Hampshire, statewide prevention initiatives have been routinely underfunded.

Until now.

Financed through the revenues generated through liquor sales in New Hampshire, the Alcohol Abuse, Prevention & Treatment Fund was established in law in 2000. By law, five percent of gross profits of alcohol sales must go to prevention, treatment, and recovery programs for substance use—expected to equal \$11 million per year in 2024 & 2025.

In the weeks leading up to the New Hampshire House Finance Committee budget hearing, New Futures identified organizations that receive funding from the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Other Drugs via the Alcohol Fund and collected stories of impact about their work.

Take "Project Succeed"—a partnership between The Youth Council, the Nashua School District and Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua—where suspended middle and high school students are screened for mental health and substance use risk factors. From there, students are offered social-emotional education and support, and referrals are provided to any needed outside services.

"Our team meets youth where they are to build relationships that help them feel seen and heard," said Casey Castor, Executive Director of The Youth Council. "If we show up early and often enough, these positive experiences with trusted adults can change a young person's trajectory."

The impact stories shared with lawmakers from programs like Project Succeed made a compelling ask: fully fund the Alcohol Fund for the first time in state history.

And New Hampshire lawmakers listened. For the first time since the fund's inception, the Alcohol Fund was fully and adequately funded—meaning more flexible resources to support local prevention programs in communities across the state.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION IN 2022

- ▶ Direct Substance Misuse Prevention Programs
- ▶ Evidence-Based Prevention Curricula in K-12 Schools
- ▶ Life of an Athlete
- ▶ Juvenile Court Diversion
- ▶ Purple Star Program—substance misuse prevention activities and support for military families
- ▶ School Climate Transformation Grant Programming and Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavioral Health (MTSS-B)
- ▶ Home Visiting
- ▶ Adverse Childhood Experience (ACES) within Domestic Violence Crisis Centers
- ▶ Youth Access to Tobacco and Alcohol Surveillance
- ▶ Student Assistance Programs
- ▶ Military Childcare Access Initiative

“Our team meets youth where they are to build relationships that help them feel seen and heard. If we show up early and often enough, these positive experiences with trusted adults can change a young person's trajectory.”

—CASEY CASTOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE YOUTH COUNCIL



Impact Report

OUR 2023 ADVOCATES:

3,000+ UNIQUE ADVOCATES	1,160+ ACTIONS TAKEN	180+ PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED
400+ STORIES COLLECTED	9,200+ TEXT MESSAGES SENT to advocates & lawmakers	

Financial Summary

OUR IMPACT:

\$1.8 Million
NEW FUTURES 2023 ANNUAL BUDGET

Was used to help secure:

\$324.68 Million
IN STATE FUNDED DOLLARS

+

\$675.78 Million
IN FEDERAL DOLLARS IN THE FY 2024-25 NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE BUDGET TO SUPPORT NEW FUTURES 2023 POLICY PRIORITIES.

Total

More than \$1 Billion

FOR PROGRAMS SUPPORTING NH'S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

Theory of Change

▶ **Cultivating Civic Leadership**

Providing individuals with the knowledge, skills, resources, and opportunities they need to take control of their story and create positive public policy change.

▶ **Educating Communities**

Providing communities with information and resources that help them understand complex issues, make informed decisions, and take action to improve the policies impacting their lives.

▶ **Building Partnerships**

Bringing together individuals, organizations, and communities to work towards common goals through collaboration, resource sharing, and coordination.

▶ **Advancing Public Policy**

Bringing the knowledge and expertise required to develop, implement, and evaluate public policy solutions to effectively address the needs and concerns of individuals and communities.



The Team at New Futures

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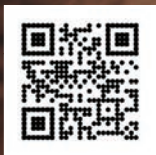
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Improving the health
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New Hampshire residents.



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