

Access to Care

GREATER SEACOAST COMMUNITY HEALTH

STRAFFORD COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH
NETWORK + ♥ ♻️



Workforce

The workforce shortage is not just an inconvenience but is considered a public health crisis since it is occurring not only in NH, but across the nation. The ongoing staffing shortage in the healthcare industry negatively impacts employee retention due to burnout. Lack of workers the industry can result in limited services, poor health outcomes and overcrowding within health facilities. New Hampshire's childcare system is also struggling to recruit and retain employees due to low wages and high operational costs, which further exacerbates the workforce shortage due to lack of affordable childcare options.



Housing and Cost of Living

The current cost of living and housing landscape is worrisome for many people across the nation. It is especially alarming in the state of New Hampshire with rising housing costs, limited child care options, and significant increases in living costs due to inflation. The availability, affordability, type, and quality of housing are significant factors for attracting and retaining a qualified workforce and attracting new businesses here in NH.



Reimbursement Rates

NH has some of the lowest Medicaid reimbursement rates in the nation at 3.1%. Low reimbursement rates create unique operational challenges in NH's healthcare industry, making recruitment and retention difficult, as neighboring states have more favorable rates. This feeds into the notion: *Why work in NH if you can commute elsewhere for better reimbursement rates?*



Children's Behavioral Health & Parental Rights

New Hampshire's children are experiencing a mental health crisis and data shows increased rates of suicidal ideation and attempts. Parents play a crucial role in directing the upbringing of their children, but this role needs to be appropriately balanced with the interests of their children and should not pose as a barrier to children accessing support, healthcare, or behavioral health services.



Insurance Coverage and Medicaid Expansion

Medicaid Expansion has helped ensure that New Hampshire residents have access to health care by enrolling people who could not otherwise afford or obtain coverage. Enrollees are able to access physical, mental, dental, and recovery health services, fill prescriptions, and seek emergency care. The program supports our workforce and small businesses, providing our low-wage employees with needed access to affordable health coverage to keep them healthy and working.



Workforce

- There are 1,353 people per doctor and 1,755 people per dentist in Strafford County NH
- There are 8.89 nurses for every 1,000 people in the state of NH
- There are 6.5 pediatricians, 3.3 psychiatrists, and 16.8 family medicine physicians for every 10,000 children in the state of NH
- If current wage patterns persist, workers in healthcare and service industries will be unlikely to afford market rate housing
- Although budgeted positions have increased at NH's Community Mental Health Centers, total vacancies have increased by 197 over the past three years
- Between Mar. 2020 and Dec. 2021, 4425 nursing assistants allowed their licenses to lapse while only 4,003 new licenses were issued, ultimately creating a loss of 422 LNAs, according to data from the NH Commission on Aging
- Labor force participation of mothers with children under the age of 5 decreased from 75.8% in 2019 to 70.7% in 2021
- A study by the Carsey School of Public Policy at UNH found that for households reporting insufficient access to childcare, the "lack of access triggered a household employment loss" for one-fifth of these households in December 2021
- Average annual salary for a childcare worker in N.H. is \$24,490 (less than \$12 per hour)



Housing and Cost of Living

- More than 4,400 people in NH experienced homelessness in FY2021, according to state data
- NH's one-year estimate for 2019 housing expenses showed that 47% of renters were "cost-burdened," meaning that more than 30 % of their gross income went to rental costs (rent + utilities)
- Vacancy rates for 2-bed units in Strafford County went from 2.10% in 2020 to 0.9% in 2021
- Only 14% of 2-bed units in Strafford County are below affordable market rent (calculated at \$1,184; based on estimated 2021 renter household income)
- In January 2020, there were 3,275 single-family homes for sale in the state. By January 2021, inventory reached 1,442; and by January 2022, only 931 single-family units were available for sale depicting a year-over-year decrease of 35.4 percent
- Between 2000 and 2020 NH home values rose 111% and rents rose 94% while the median income of a NH household increased by only 73%
- U.S. Dept of Health considers childcare affordable when it consumes no more than 7% of a household income. In NH, childcare averages \$14,425 per year, which is 37% of a single parent's income and 11% of a two-parent household earning \$120K annually.

Reimbursement Rates

- While the underlying Medicaid fee schedule has had few rate increases over the years, NH still has one of the lowest Medicaid reimbursement rates in the nation
- Low Medicaid Reimbursement rates make it challenging for healthcare facilities to offer competitive salaries
- The reimbursement rate for Medicaid is about 60% less than reimbursement for private insurance

Children's Behavioral Health & Parental Rights

- 45.2% of Strafford County Highschool students felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row and stopped doing some usual activities in the past 12 months
- 54.9% of Strafford County Highschool students never or rarely got help they needed when they felt sad, empty, hopeless, angry or anxious
- 26.7% Strafford County Highschool students have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months
- Students who have the ability to have support systems outside of their families have better behavioral health outcomes, especially if they've been exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) at home.

Insurance Coverage and Medicaid Expansion

- In 2020, 1 in 11 adults delayed or did not seek medical care due to cost; 26% of uninsured adults delayed seeking care and 23% did not receive care
- As of June 30, 2022 8,540 Strafford County residents were enrolled in Medicaid Expansion, which is 10.3% of the population
- Nearly 30,000 Granite Staters accessed mental health medication treatments at least once through Medicaid Expansion in the last fiscal year, while at least 8,600 unique individuals received some form of substance use disorder care services
- Medicaid Expansion also paid for 6,000 people who needed dental care, including enrollees aged 19 and 20 years who had full dental benefits and enrollees aged 21 years and older who only had emergency dental services covered through Medicaid Expansion in SFY22
- In FY2022, 70% of Community Mental Health Center's revenues were for Medicaid enrollees, many of which have severe & persistent mental illness
- Since the start of Medicaid Expansion:
 - 63% reduction in the number of uninsured patients seeking emergency care.
 - 57% drop in uninsured patient admissions,
 - 41% reduction in uninsured outpatient admissions.
 - Uncompensated care attributable to uninsured patients plummeted from \$173 million in 2014 to \$69 million in 2021