



# New Hampshire Commission on Aging

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March 10, 2023

NH House Finance Committee, Division I  
Legislative Office Building, Room 210

Chairman Leishman and Members of the Committee,

**The Commission on Aging was established during the 2019 Legislative Session (RSA Chapter 19-P) with a primary charge to advise the Governor and General Court on issues related to aging.**

**Who is the Commission?** The Commission consists of 26 very smart, very committed members including legislators, state agency reps, and governor appointees, supported by 1.57 FTE staff. The full list of Commission members is on the left side of the front page of the February edition of the Commission's newsletter that I've provided today. The newsletter, *Aging Matters*, is produced by a Commission member and is published monthly. You each receive it at your legislature email address. It is chocked full of information – some articles focus on policy issues, but the majority is valuable information you can share with your constituents. Please let us know if you would like it to come to an alternative email address. (Or if you have content to include!) This newsletter is just one service we provide the public.

The Commission meets monthly – doing so even through the early days of COVID. The Commission also has 4 Task Forces and one sub-committee that also each meet monthly. The Commission assesses existing and potential public policies' effectiveness in providing an opportunity for all of us as we age to be a thriving part of the fabric of the communities in which we live. During the last legislative session, we tracked over 60 bills in the state legislature, providing written information and education to legislators on over 10 bills. This current session we are tracking 36 bills, and to date, have provided written information and education to legislators 13 bills. (Just this AM I facilitated a meeting as requested by Senator Bradley and Senator Whitley between DHHS and Advocates on SB36 System of Care for Healthy Aging!)

We also investigate current issues and respond to concerns raised by various stakeholders including the public at large. To hear those concerns, we conduct community engagement sessions throughout the state and throughout the year. This past year, hearing from community members about the devastating impact of COVID upon senior centers and senior programming, we worked with the Governor's Office and BEA to find ways to bring federal relief funds to them. We also publish a monthly newsletter targeted to older adults in the State, sharing valuable information on program and services and public policy. And we implement an annual awards program honoring older adult volunteers across the state that has been a tradition in our state since 1962. We publish an annual report each November 1<sup>st</sup>. A copy of the exec. Summary is before you and should give you a sense of the breadth and depth of the Commission's work.

**Why was the Commission created?** As is evidenced on the graph on the backside of the Commission's Annual Report Executive Summary, the demographics of our state are changing. Our mean age is rising. Currently over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of NH's population is over age 55. The 80+ population is currently 4.3% of our pop. BEA's population projections published in September suggest that by the year 2050, close to 12% of our state's population will be 80 years old or older. This rise is set to have significant impact on our state – on how our communities' function and on our county and state budgets. The Commission is here to study the related issues and inform and educate the Governor and General Court on how to shape our policies, systems, and communities in response to these changes to maintain and even improve up the quality of life in New Hampshire.



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## Shift to a discussion of the Commission on Aging budget:

- We are a small but mighty agency with 1.57 staff and very basic office operations. (The Exec. Summary of the Annual report is in black and white because there is no budget for color copies.) 83% of FY24 budget and 84% of FY25 budget is for salary and benefits.
- Staffing increases in the FY24/25 budget are for 0.4FTE or 15 hour/week. These hours will be utilized for administrative support and policy analysis to improve the quantity and quality of services outlined in RSA-19P:2 and align with Commission on Aging goals 1 – 4 in budget documents. Funding will allow me to focus more on the role of an executive director, writing grant proposals to bring in additional resources to the state, creating the desired impact of the Commission.
- Departmental Operating budget increases over FY2023 for FY2024 beyond staffing incorporate a planning consultant for strategic planning that we hope you will engage in with us this summer. In 2020 members of the Commission developed a strategic map to clarify our purpose and areas of study. We are ready this year to engage policy makers and state leadership to create a more ambitious Master Plan or Multi-sectoral Long-term Plan for New Hampshire to address the demographic shift, with a longer time horizon.
- As a relatively new agency, the budget continues to be a work in progress. New intra-agency transfers to DOIT in class 27 were added to this biennium budget. FY2024 transfers to other Agencies like General Services increased significantly over the prior fiscal year - approximately \$7K.

Happy to go into any detail desired.

Thank you for time and consideration.

Rebecca Sky, Executive Director

New Hampshire State Commission on Aging



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## Summary of Commission on Aging Actions November 2021 – October 2022

- Monthly Commission on Aging Meetings investigating issues of concern.
- Monthly Task Force Meetings diving deeper into issue areas.
- State House Policy Team Meetings –weekly during the session, monthly throughout the year. Identifying bills with greatest impact on all of us as we age. Organizing and delivering guidance to legislature and governor.
- Written testimony submitted providing background information on 10+ bills during 2022 session.
- *Aging Matters* - Monthly newsletter for older adults highlighting activities of the Commission as well as information on state and local nonprofit services, programs, and other news people can use throughout the year.
- Older Adult Volunteer Awards – Individuals and couples from each county are honored at a ceremony annual held in the Executive Council Chambers with the Governor during Older Americans Month in May.
- Task Force Issue brief, “Aging in One’s Community of Choice and Long-Term Services & Supports in NH”, published March 10, 2022.
- Letter to the Governor requesting American Rescue Plan Act funds for an assessment of older adult transportation needs.
- 10+ various community engagement events

## Collaborative Actions:

- CARES Act Funding made available to senior centers.
- 2022 Bills signed into law:

### Workforce Development - Supporting the Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) Workforce

- **HB 1030** - Allows certain military training & experience to replace clinical experience requirements for LNA licensure.
- **HB 1659** - Allows conditional employment (90 days) of a LNA awaiting results of a criminal background check if LNA if certain criteria is met. Allows temporary licenses for LNAs if a person has passed the examination requirement and passed a criminal background check as part of their nursing assistant training.

### Supporting Financial Resilience

- **SB 281** - Prohibits a private nursing home or assisted living facility from enforcing a 30-day notice of vacancy policy in the event of a resident's death, allowing only up to 10 days of rent & fees.
- **SB 385** – Allows financial institutions to delay a disbursement for a limited time from an account if financial exploitations is suspected.
- **SB 404** - Establishes a supplemental nutrition assistance program outreach program.
- **SB 414** - Revises the definition of ADRD, Alzheimer's disease and related disorders to include people with symptoms but without diagnosis relative to access to respite care services.
- **SB 450** - Clarifying and strengthening the structure of the prescription drug affordability board.
- **HB 1526** – Expands income limits for participation in NH’s “in and out medical assistance” program.



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## **Enabling Access to Health Care and a Social Isolation Prevention Strategy**

- **SB 229** – Permitting pharmacy technicians to administer vaccines.
  - **SB 390** – Allows use of asynchronous telemedicine, employing text- or picture-based interactions.
  - **SB 397** – Adopts interstate mental health counseling compact and compact for the placement of children.
  - **SB 422** – Provides dental care under Medicaid managed care.
  - **SB 445** –Relative to the broadband matching grant initiative.
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- **2023 Legislative Session: Tracking 36 bills, with education & information provided on 13 bills to date.**