

newfutures 
SOLVING PROBLEMS THROUGH POLICY CHANGE



2024
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 policymakers and secure the passage of laws that improve access to child care, children's mental health services, affordable health care, and healthy aging supports. 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

Dear Friends and Partners,

We know that elections bring a great deal of uncertainty. While the political landscape may shift, one thing remains the same: the need for evidence-based policy, steady advocacy, and community partnership. No matter the outcome, **New Futures will continue to champion the health and well-being of all Granite Staters, staying the course through every challenge, alongside you.**

This year, we are proud to have expanded our work in two areas that are essential to the future of New Hampshire: child care and healthy aging. These initiatives are not only timely but critical to the well-being of our communities.

By increasing our capacity in early care and education, we are building on our work to ensure that every family has access to affordable, quality care, supporting both the growth of our children and the strength of our workforce.

In healthy aging, we are expanding on the work of the New Hampshire Alliance for Healthy Aging to advocate for policies that allow older adults to age with dignity and access the care they need.

Of course, these areas of work also build on our existing priorities. We continue to push for stronger systems in mental health and substance use disorder treatment, public health, and other policies that invest in the long-term health of our state.

Amid uncertainty, the dedication of our supporters, partners, and advocates brings New Futures incredible optimism.

Together, we will keep moving onward — because the work we do today will shape a healthier, more equitable future for all Granite Staters.

Thank you for your partnership and support as we continue this important work.

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

Improving access to quality child care, strengthening families, and reducing adverse childhood experiences.



Child Care for Child Care Teachers

For Meagan Galvin, working with Nashua's most vulnerable children as a Head Start early educator is rewarding beyond words. She has dedicated 16 years to her profession.

But it comes at a steep price.

"The cost of child care is currently the main factor limiting my family size," Meagan told members of a Senate Committee during a public hearing in January.

Meagan and her husband welcomed their first child almost three years ago. Her husband makes too much money for them to qualify for the New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship program, so more than half of Meagan's paycheck goes to cover the cost of her daughter's child care.

"If I were to have a second child, it would not make economic sense for me to continue working," Meagan added.

It is no surprise that New Hampshire is facing a child care workforce shortage, as many early childhood educators leave the workforce to seek better-paying jobs when they start their own families. The average child care worker earns just \$32,000 annually, barely higher than the average annual price of \$31,868 for a family with an infant and a four-year-old in center-based care.

Annually, New Hampshire faces an average shortage of about 8,400 child care slots. In Nashua, where Meagan works, only six out of 11 Head Start classrooms were open in 2023 due to staffing shortages.

This prompted New Futures to champion legislation to help retain New Hampshire's early childhood professionals with their own young children.

Thanks to the work of New Futures and many partner organizations, starting in January 2025, child care professionals in households earning up to 100 percent of the state median income will receive automatic access to the New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship, meaning these families will pay no more than seven percent of their household income on child care expenses. New Futures aims to transition this program from a pilot to a permanent state program during the next legislative session.

What's Next

There's still more to do to improve access to early care and education in New Hampshire, like investing in state-funded, mixed-delivery universal pre-kindergarten.

CHILD CARE STATISTICS

▪ **\$31,868**

the average annual cost for an infant and four-year-old in center-based child care in New Hampshire

▪ **\$32,000**

the average annual salary for a child care professional in New Hampshire

▪ **71%**

of child care providers nationwide report their program is experiencing a staffing shortage

▪ **57.5%**

of providers with staffing shortages nationwide report they are serving fewer children

“Last year, I spent 56% of my weekly take-home pay on my two-year-old's child care. It's a regular conversation in my house on whether or not it's worth continuing to work on the pay I actually bring home each week.”

— MEAGAN GALVIN, PARENT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR



CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Supporting a comprehensive system of care for children and families.



Cordelia Dubois (center) waits to testify at the Legislative Office Building with her SEL teachers from kindergarten (school counselor Rebecca Dutcher, left) and 1st grade (school psychologist Tara Spencer, right). Also waiting patiently is Liberty, New Hampshire's first police comfort dog, a Choose Love Movement ambassador with the Concord Police Department.

Cordelia's Story

Seven-year-old Cordelia Dubois is like any other second-grader at Abbot-Downing School in Concord. She plays tag with her friends on the playground, learns about reading and math, and experiences moments of frustration. But there's something special about Cordelia — despite her age, she's not afraid to show courage and speak up for what she believes in.

Last year, Cordelia attended social-emotional learning (SEL) class at school. "SEL class helps me stay calm and be happier," she said, explaining how she learns about being kind on the playground, what to do when she gets angry, and how to express courage and gratitude.

Earlier this year, a bill surfaced that would have banned SEL in public schools. When her mom, a New Futures staff member, told her about the bill, Cordelia decided to take action by testifying at the New Hampshire State House before the House Education Committee. According to the Committee Chair, she was the youngest person to ever do so. She explained to state lawmakers how SEL positively impacts her and her classmates, demonstrating techniques like five-finger deep breathing and the Emotional ABCs Toolbar, which help her manage her feelings.

SEL is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills vital for school, work, and life success. Extensive research shows a correlation between the skills taught in SEL programs and academic achievement, positive behavior, decreased stress and anxiety, and healthier life choices.

Cordelia wasn't the only Granite Stater to speak up in defense of SEL — at the bill's public hearing in January, over 40 educators, administrators, mental health professionals, and parents testified in front of lawmakers, and an astounding 4,290 people registered their opposition to the bill online.

State lawmakers heard the message loud and clear that New Hampshire families want SEL in schools. They quickly defeated the bill, and looking forward, Granite State kids will continue to have the opportunity to learn these vital life skills to thrive both academically and emotionally.

At New Futures, the work isn't always to advance proactive policy solutions. Sometimes, it is working alongside children and their families to defend critical programs and services that support their well-being.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STATISTICS

- **1 in 5**
children in New Hampshire has a diagnosable mental illness
- **86%**
of NH family members agreed that it's important for their school district to offer social and emotional supports in addition to academics
- **91.8%**
of NH school principals reported providing "universal mental health promotion programs," which can include SEL and other Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- **79%**
of employers say SEL skills are the most important qualities for job success

A photograph of a woman lying in a hospital bed, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. Her hands are being held and supported by a doctor's hands. The doctor is wearing a light blue lab coat. The background is a blurred hospital room.

HEALTH

Ensuring access
to quality, affordable
health care.



Community Health Matters

For years, community health workers (CHWs) have played a critical role helping to deliver health care to many Granite Staters who need it most.

Now, they'll have more help from the State.

This past year, New Futures and many other partner organizations on the N.H. Health Care Workforce Coalition helped pass a law establishing voluntary certification for CHWs, the frontline health care professionals who engage deeply within specific communities to increase access to health care services and strengthen cultural competency of service delivery.

Voluntary certification will strengthen the field of community health workers in several ways: it will create a clearer career path for these professionals; and it will allow health care providers to receive Medicaid reimbursement for their services. This will create a new funding stream to help recruit and retain more CHWs, deepening the impact of their work.

"Helping to build an individual's capacity to care for themselves is a fundamental part of the CHW role," said Paula Smith, Director for the Southern New Hampshire Area Health Education Center, during a House Committee public hearing in April.

"One community health worker shared a story with me about helping a person who was living in a van," added Paula. "The CHW helped the person get glasses, which allowed him to get a job. He was then able to get an apartment on his own."

Currently, there are more than 100 CHWs working around New Hampshire in hospitals, community health centers, family resource centers, and public health departments, among other locations. There, they often work in underserved or underrepresented communities to screen individuals for Social Determinants of Health, help them to navigate health and social service systems, and connect them to services like housing, child care, and food, among others.

The benefits of CHWs and their work extend far beyond individual patients and communities.

Studies show that for every dollar spent on intervention by a CHW, there's a return on investment of \$2.47 to a Medicaid payer. With voluntary certification coming into place, CHWs are supporting the physical, social, and financial health of the Granite State.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER STATISTICS

▪ **\$2.47**

the return on investment to a Medicaid payer for every dollar spent on a CHW intervention

▪ **58%**

of CHWs work in community-based organizations, local health departments, schools, insurance providers, and family resource centers. The remaining CHWs work in clinical settings.

“ Helping to build an individual’s capacity to care for themselves is a fundamental part of the community health worker role. ”

— PAULA SMITH, DIRECTOR, SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER



SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

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



Supporting Recovery

Across New Hampshire, access to stable housing remains one of the greatest obstacles for individuals battling addiction. Particularly for individuals in early recovery from substance use disorder, a safe and healthy living environment is critical to health and well-being.

Recovery housing offers supervised, often short-term housing for individuals in early recovery. Data shows that access to recovery housing is associated with positive outcomes including decreased rates of substance use, lower chances of reoccurrence, and reduced rates of incarceration.

Currently, New Hampshire has 100 recovery homes certified across the state, offering 1,317 beds to Granite Staters in early recovery. However, according to estimates from the N.H. Coalition of Recovery Residences, there is not one city or town in New Hampshire that has enough recovery beds to meet the needs of their community. The state would need more than 15,000 additional beds to meet the demand.

“Recovery homes are where the real work starts for people in recovery,” said Shawn Cannizzaro, owner of Hope 2 Freedom Recovery Homes in Claremont, during a House Committee public hearing in January. “When they leave treatment, they have to navigate real life challenges like finding a job, reuniting with family, going to court, getting a driver’s license, and participating in recovery meetings. After all that, when they come home, they have roommates to help them get through the night without using substances.”

During the 2024 legislative session, New Futures championed legislation seeking to increase access to recovery housing across New Hampshire. This bill, which fell short in the legislature, would have clarified state zoning and fire regulations to encourage the development of recovery homes around the state.

When Shawn first decided to open a recovery home, his goal was to simply help people like someone helped him. “With zoning, planning, fire regulations, and all that, I had to learn as I went. I had a lot of support from my city, but there was still a lot of confusion around the law. It took seven months of working with the zoning board and city to finally open a new house. Across those seven months, people probably died because they didn’t have anywhere to go.”

What’s Next

Although the 2024 legislation didn’t make it to the finish line this year, New Futures will continue to work with partners across the state to encourage development of recovery homes and further address our state’s ongoing addiction crisis.

RECOVERY HOUSING STATISTICS

- 100
 recovery homes certified across the state
- 1,317
 beds in recovery homes across the Granite State
- 0
 recovery homes in Coös and Rockingham counties
- 15,419
 additional beds needed statewide

“Recovery homes are where the real work starts for people in recovery. When they leave treatment, they have to navigate real life challenges like finding a job, reuniting with family, going to court, getting a driver’s licence, and participating in recovery meetings.”

— SHAWN CANNIZZARO, OWNER OF HOPE 2 FREEDOM RECOVERY HOMES



PUBLIC HEALTH

Protecting
New Hampshire's
public health
system.



New Hampshire Charitable Foundation staff Traci Fowler and Seana McDuffie and representatives of statewide Regional Public Health Networks pose in front of the New Hampshire State House after an Advocacy Training with New Futures where they learned about the legislative process and how to get involved.

Advocating for Public Health

Public health and advocacy go hand in hand when it comes to improving the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Public health leaders strive to protect and promote healthy communities and advocating for change is a big piece of those efforts — that is why New Futures has partnered with the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation on the Regional Public Health Network Advocacy Grant Program for the last three years.

This grant is available to all of New Hampshire’s 13 Regional Public Health Networks to help support community-based partners working to advance public health and behavioral health equity by participating in policy and advocacy efforts. With technical support from New Futures, the networks, which work with partner organizations to expand regional infrastructure and coordination around public health services, pursue a range of advocacy activities. Network leaders take the time to develop local strategies that would work best for their region’s communities.

“We decided to focus on bills that we would directly work to address,” said Andrea Smith from the Upper Valley Public Health Network. “Those topics included substance use disorder, mental health, LGBTQIA+, and other relevant public health bills because those issues were important to the community we represent.”

Smith said their network shared New Futures’ social media tools and many of their infographics to elevate their voices as the experts. They also created a weekly newsletter to inform recipients of actions they could take in a timely manner related to each bill.

The Capital Area Public Health Network utilized the funding and the advocacy expertise of New Futures to co-host a Parent Advocacy Workshop earlier this spring. The workshop was designed to empower parents with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively advocate for their communities.

“The event was very well-received, with participants expressing increased confidence in engaging with legislative processes and advocating for issues important to their families and communities,” said Ashley Sullivan, the Director of Behavioral Health Strategies at Granite United Way. “We hope to offer this again and have a youth-focused workshop this upcoming legislative session.”

New Futures’ proven ability to nurture and foster community advocacy efforts on important public health policies will ultimately lead to a healthier New Hampshire.

RPHN STATISTICS

▪ **13**
Regional Public Health Networks
in New Hampshire

▪ **\$65,000**
available in funding annually for
RPHN advocacy through the New
Hampshire Charitable Foundation



ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Preventing substance use through community education and regulatory strategies.



Working Together to Prevent Alcohol Misuse

It's no secret that New Hampshire has a robust network of state-run liquor stores.

In 2023, the New Hampshire Liquor Commission (NHLC) generated \$756.7 million in revenue from alcohol sales - \$165 million of which was earmarked to support critical state programs. While New Hampshire's liquor revenue bodes well for the state's economy, alcohol use can have unintended consequences and impacts on individuals, families, and communities. From 2017–2019, the annual average prevalence of past-year alcohol use disorder in New Hampshire was 18.2% (or 26,000 individuals) — nearly double the national average (9.8%).

New Futures' efforts in preventing substance misuse through community education and regulatory strategies would not be possible without the engagement of the New Hampshire Liquor Commission and its commitment to protecting the well-being of customers, promoting responsible consumption, and preventing service to minors. While there is always room for improvement in the area of substance use prevention in the state, New Hampshire is unique due to the prevention community's strong working relationship with the state's alcohol control agency; working together on policy issues and special projects that support public health and prevention values.

A strong example of this partnership occurred in 2024 after legislation was introduced to require the New Hampshire Liquor Commission to produce and distribute information about alcohol use disorder at liquor stores. After discussions with policymakers, stakeholders, and New Futures, it became clear that this project could happen outside of the legislative process.

With input from experts in the field, the New Hampshire Liquor Commission produced a video in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services that is now shown on screens in all 65 New Hampshire Liquor & Wine Outlets. The video utilizes appropriate terminology and strikes the right tone to encourage those struggling with substance use disorder to reach out for support.

"In the journey of life, we all face tough obstacles. It takes real courage to ask for help, especially when it comes to our mental health or substance use challenges," says the video.

"Remember, you are not alone - help is just a call away."

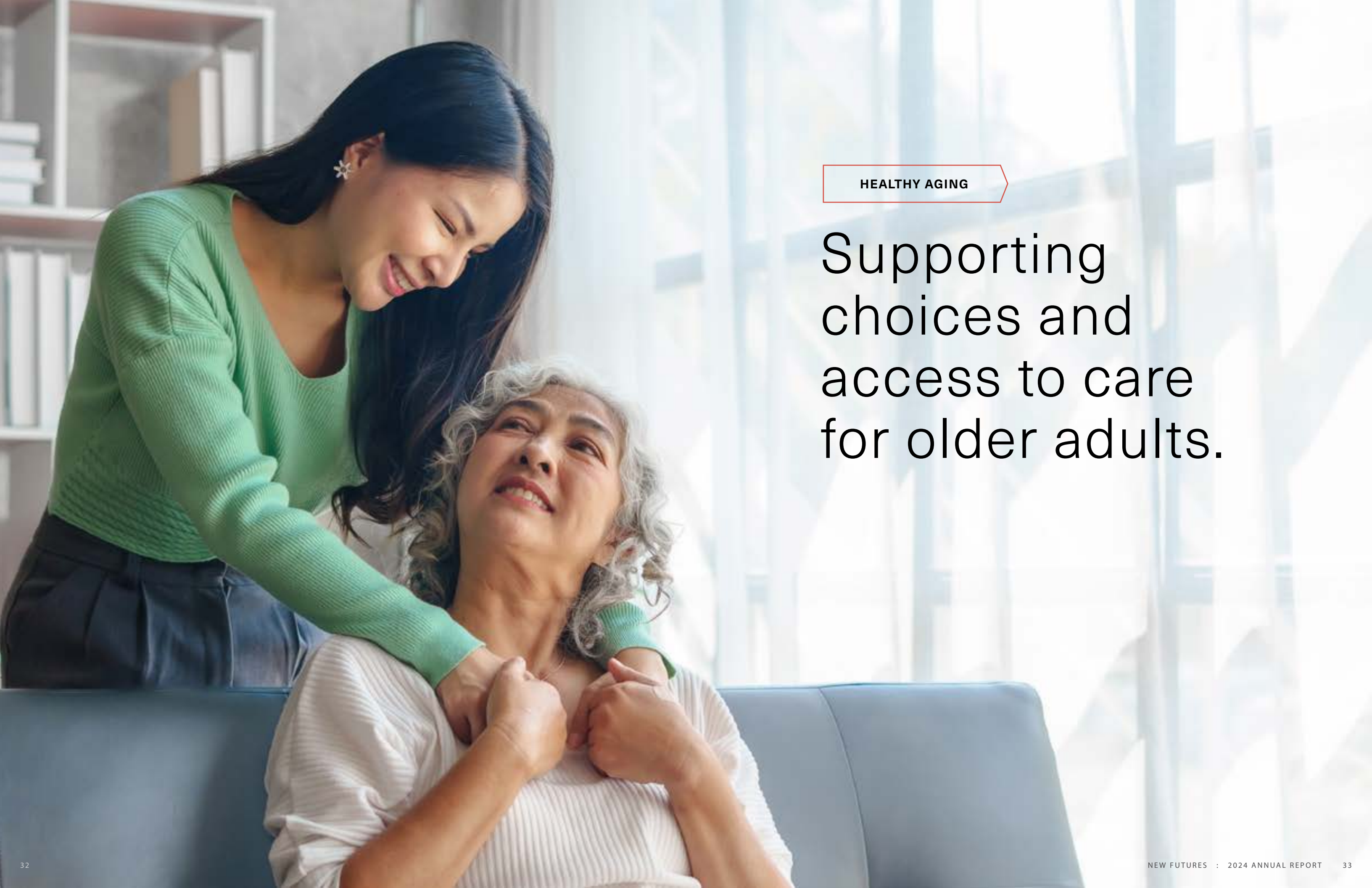
What's Next

New Futures and partners will continue to work on legislation that restricts the distribution of alcohol products that share the same branding with popular children's products (like Hard Mountain Dew and Sunny D vodka seltzer).

RESOURCE INFORMATION



Watch the video airing in New Hampshire liquor store outlets to increase awareness about alcohol use disorder.



HEALTHY AGING

Supporting
choices and
access to care
for older adults.

A System of Care for Healthy Aging

New Hampshire has one of the fastest growing populations of older adults in the nation. By 2030, 30% of the state's population will be over the age of 65.

Unfortunately, limited program coordination and years of stagnant Medicaid reimbursement rates slowed the growth of New Hampshire's delivery system for older adult services.

Until last year.

In 2023, New Futures played a pivotal role in the passage of landmark legislation known as the System of Care for Healthy Aging. The System of Care is a multi-faceted plan to promote healthy aging and provide meaningful service options for older adults, including the ability to receive long-term services and supports in the home.

"I had chronic fear about whether my direct-care worker would show up in the morning to help me get out of bed and into my wheelchair," said Carol Conforti-Adams, who lives in Bradford.

Carol experienced years of receiving inconsistent assistance because of the low Medicaid reimbursement rates for the Choices for Independence (CFI) home and community-based services program.

Now under the System of Care and CFI rate increases, Carol's sense of well-being has drastically improved. "It's like night and day. For now, those days of worry and sleepless nights are over, and I can enjoy life knowing that I'll have the help I need to start my day."

Over the past year, New Futures has monitored the implementation and impact of the new law to ensure that older adults, like Carol, have access to critical services.

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services has made significant improvements, including hiring staff to oversee the System of Care, expanding eligibility for some programs, and strengthening resources for older adults through Aging and Disability Resource Centers, among other efforts.

With the System of Care in place, New Hampshire is taking the right steps to better support older adults and their families, and New Futures is there to support the ongoing work.

SYSTEM OF CARE STATISTICS

▪ **30%**

of the state's population will be over the age of 65 by 2030

▪ **\$1.7 million**

secured in funding for the System of Care for Healthy Aging

▪ **\$15.1 million**

secured for increased utilization of the Choices for Independence (CFI) Medicaid waiver program

▪ **\$110.2 million**

in Medicaid reimbursement rate increases to recruit and retain health care workers across NH



Impact Report

OUR 2024 ADVOCATES:

2,900+

UNIQUE ADVOCATES

2,200+

ADVOCACY EMAILS SENT TO LAWMAKERS

180+

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

170+

STORIES COLLECTED

7,600+

TEXT MESSAGES SENT TO ADVOCATES & LAWMAKERS

Financial Summary

OUR IMPACT:

\$3.6 Million

NEW FUTURES 2023-24 BUDGET

Was used to help secure:

\$327.12 Million

IN STATE-FUNDED DOLLARS

+

\$681.55 Million

IN FEDERAL & OTHER DOLLARS IN THE FY 2024-25 NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE BUDGET

Total

**More than
\$1 Billion**

FOR PROGRAMS SUPPORTING NEW HAMPSHIRE'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**

Supplying 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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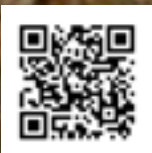
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Improving the health
and well-being of all
New Hampshire residents.



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