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Press Release

N.H. Health Care Leaders Call for Remote Access to 2022 Legislative Session

Concord, NH -- Today, twenty-five of New Hampshire's leading health providers and advocacy organizations called for NH House and Senate leaders to extend remote public access to the Legislature once again during the upcoming 2022 session.

During the 2021 session, remote access over Zoom, authorized due to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed thousands of Granite Staters to engage in the legislative process, testifying and attending public hearings and committee sessions virtually without risking their health and safety.

With COVID-19 still surging across New Hampshire, health leaders believe remote access to the legislature is necessary once again to maintain both the physical and civic health of the Granite State.

"As you often remind us, the State House is the people's house, and public input and the right to know are critical components of New Hampshire's legislative process," the organizations wrote in a letter sent Monday to House Speaker Sherman Packard and Senate President Chuck Morse. "Yet, with the COVID-19 pandemic still raging throughout our state, individuals would have to put their own health, and that of their families, friends, neighbors, and communities, at risk in order to attend and testify in-person at legislative committee hearings, meetings, and sessions.

"Conversely, as we learned during the 2021 session, videoconferencing effectively provides safe and secure access to legislative proceedings to citizens, health care providers and advocates all across New Hampshire," the group wrote. "This maintains the health of your constituents, expands the pool of perspectives and experiences represented at committee hearings, and more fully informs our legislative process. For the health and wellness of our state and its residents, we ask you to adopt a system of virtual access to all House committee hearings, meetings and sessions for the coming Legislative session."

Signers of the letter include the Disability Rights Center - N.H, NAMI New Hampshire (the National Alliance on Mental Illness), New Futures, N.H. Legal Assistance, the N.H. Medical Society, the N.H. Public Health Association and other groups representing primary, healthy aging and disability care, substance use and mental health treatment, and other providers and patients across the Granite State.

The 2022 legislative session is scheduled to begin in January.

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