



# 2020 – 2021 Policy Priorities Survey Results

New Futures is a health and wellness policy and advocacy organization. We work with coalitions, partners, and individuals to advocate for policy improvements in five issue areas: alcohol and other drug misuse prevention and regulation, health care, early childhood, children's behavioral health, and access to behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorder) treatment and recovery.

## The Process

Over the past few months, we asked you to tell us what issues you wanted to advocate on during the 2021 legislative session. We sent out a survey to ask for your feedback and held virtual listening sessions around the state. We heard from parents, consumers, teachers, social workers, public health workers, people in recovery, health providers, and more. You told us about yourselves, your families, your communities, the hardships you have experienced and witnessed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. You shared your fears and frustrations, and your hopes for the future. Your passion moved and inspired us. Thank you to all who participated in this process.

## Survey Results

### What we asked...

- What policy priority areas you're interested in
- What health and wellness related issues should we consider as policy priorities in 2021
- What you see as immediate needs in to improve health and wellness in our state

### You wrote about...

- Access to mental health treatment, substance use disorder treatment, and recovery support services
- Suicide prevention, combatting hopelessness, and boosting resilience
- Increasing the health care workforce and Medicaid reimbursement rates
- Community-based prevention and positive youth development infrastructure
- Continued work on the improved System of Care and the implementation and monitoring of the 10-Year Mental Health Plan
- Combatting food insecurity across all ages, but especially for children and the elderly
- Affordable childcare and access to family supports
- Unsafe homes for children as remote learning continues
- Healthcare costs, access, and equity
- The impacts of COVID-19 – especially on childcare, accessing mental health and SUD treatment, and accessing other health care
- And so much more.

[See the complete survey here](#)

## Listening Sessions

Members of the New Futures Community Engagement team held listening sessions across the state with coalitions, community partners, and advocates. The listening sessions turned out better than we could have hoped for – we got to listen to you have powerful and often personal conversations about issues you care about and how they impact you, your families, your communities, and your state.

Issues that came up in these listening sessions include:

- Affordable housing
- Access to substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports, including
  - More SUD treatment programs that allow parents to have their children with them
  - Respite beds before entering treatment programs
  - Recovery housing
  - Increasing SUD treatment and aftercare services available after detox
  - More SUD treatment programs that allow parents to have their children with them
  - More substance use disorder treatment for incarcerated people
  - Education and training around medication assisted treatment
- Access mental health treatment
  - Mental health supports and access to in person services for people in recovery
  - Mobile crisis
  - Behavioral health supports in schools
  - More emergency and residential care options for kids
  - Access to emergency and residential mental health care when appropriate
- The impact of the lack of access to treatment and housing on kids and families
- Access to affordable childcares and new issues caused by COVID-19
- Increased healthcare workforce
- Support for clinicians experiencing burnout
- Higher wages for people working in community mental health centers
- Paid family leave
- Substance misuse prevention, prevention programming in schools, and Student Assistance Programs (SAPs) in schools
- Access to health insurance and health care, including
  - Continuing to ensure and expand telehealth access, especially in rural areas with less broadband internet availability
  - Equity in health care
  - Lowering the cost of prescription drugs
  - Making hospital visits affordable, lowering the cost of transportation via ambulance
- Support for young families
- Supports for caregivers
- Lead poisoning prevention and assistance for remediation
- Homelessness
- Increase the alcohol fund
- Increase and supplement Medicaid reimbursement rates
- Grandparents raising grandchildren who are struggling, especially due to COVID
- Food insecurity
- Respite care for families

## What's Next

The New Futures policy team and policy priority committees have heard and read what you shared with us. In deciding what policy priorities we will focus on in 2021, we also considered political realities, whether or not there are other advocacy partners who are already doing work on issues you mentioned or are better-suited to lead such work, and the breadth of the potential impact of legislation related to the issues.

Taking all of this into consideration, we came up with the **Five Points for a Healthy Budget in New Hampshire**.

The upcoming year at the State House is going to look different than it has in the past as legislators try to stay safe and keep their constituents safe. During these unprecedented times, advocacy is more important than ever to ensure your voices are heard in the important decisions being made to determine the future health and wellness of our state.

## What You Can Do Now

### Share your story!

Do you have a story about health and wellness that you want to share with New Futures or with lawmakers to advocate for a healthy NH budget? We won't share your story with anyone without permission! [Click here to share your story.](#)

### Sign up for an advocacy training!

Learn how to advocate for a healthy New Hampshire or hone your skills for the 2021 legislative session. [Click here to learn more about our training program and upcoming trainings.](#)

### Reach out to your New Futures community engagement coordinator with questions!

We're here to help you advocate and provide information and support.

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