



June 4, 2019

Dear New Hampshire House of Representatives,

On behalf of those living with cystic fibrosis (CF), the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation urges you to support important safeguards against gaps in coverage caused by the Granite Advantage Health Care Program community engagement requirements by voting “yes” on SB 290. This bill would reduce the administrative burden on medically frail beneficiaries to secure an exemption, reinstate Medicaid retroactive eligibility, and halt the community engagement requirements if more than 500 members lose coverage or if providers experience an increase in uncompensated care—all of which help beneficiaries, including people with CF, maintain critical Medicaid coverage.

Cystic fibrosis is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects more than 200 people in New Hampshire and 30,000 children and adults in the United States. CF causes the body to produce thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and digestive system, which can lead to persistent lung infections and respiratory failure. As a complex, multi-system condition, CF requires targeted, specialized treatment and medications, which must be taken regularly throughout the patient’s entire life. Medicaid is a crucial source of coverage for people with CF, including 80 adults living in New Hampshire.

SB 290 would help ensure people with CF who depend on Medicaid are not subject to community engagement requirements. Making work a condition of Medicaid eligibility could threaten access to care for people with CF, as their ability to work can vary over time with changes in health status. Declines in health status due to pulmonary exacerbations, infections, and other events are common and can take someone out of the workforce for significant periods of time. Administrative burden can also lead to confusion for beneficiaries, even those who are exempt from the work requirements, and cause them to lose coverage. SB 290 eliminates the requirement for a physician to annually attest to a beneficiary’s physical or mental inability to participate in the community engagement requirements, helping people with CF maintain their exemption and avoiding gaps in coverage.

This legislation also reinstates the Medicaid retroactive eligibility period, which is an important protection for people with CF. The state’s waiver previously eliminated the 90-day Medicaid retroactive eligibility period for nonpregnant adults, which puts people with CF at risk of large out-of-pocket costs. Cystic fibrosis care and treatments are costly and even with coverage. For instance, according to a survey conducted by George Washington University of 2,500 people living with CF, 45 percent of this patient population spend \$5,000 or more annually in out-of-pocket costs for copayments, coinsurance, and noncovered services. Retroactive eligibility helps ensure continuous coverage for people with CF who experience changes in insurance status and become Medicaid eligible.

Lastly, SB 290 would halt implementation of the work requirements if 500 or more beneficiaries lose coverage or if providers experience an increase in uncompensated care due to the requirements. This safeguard will ensure that the community engagement requirements in New Hampshire do not lead to



massive coverage losses like those seen in Arkansas. To date, Arkansas has seen 18,164 people lose Medicaid coverage as a result of its work requirements.

We urge you to vote “yes” on SB 290. The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation appreciates your attention to this important issue for the CF community in New Hampshire. By supporting this bill, you will help ensure continued access to quality, specialty care for people with CF who depend on Granite Advantage for coverage. We look forward to working with the state of New Hampshire as the health care landscape continues to evolve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary B. Dwight".

Mary B. Dwight
Senior Vice President of Policy & Advocacy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Feng".

Lisa Feng, DrPH
Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy