

New Hampshire Hospital Association

Legislative Update

NNE HFMA Legislative Update Webinar

April 12, 2022

Steve Ahnen, President
New Hampshire Hospital Association



Federal Update

2022 Elections: Conventional Wisdom

- Midterm elections usually go against the President's party
- Current indicators suggest Democratic House majority is in jeopardy
- Senate looks like more of a toss up
- Six months is a lifetime in politics, gave up making election predictions
 - All politics are local
 - Inflation/economic outlook
 - Pandemic outlook

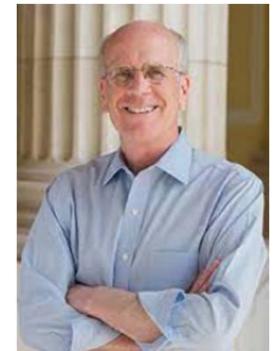


Federal Update

Congressional Retirements/Key Races

House

- 31 Democrats/14 Republicans
 - Peter Welch (VT)...running for Senate



Senate

- 1 Democrat, 5 Republicans
 - Patrick Leahy (VT)
- New Hampshire Senate
 - Maggie Hassan (D)



Federal Update

COVID-19 Relief

- Recent COVID-19 relief measures failed to provide additional funding for the Provider Relief Fund (PRF), despite ongoing increase in expenses
 - Most recent \$10 billion relief package failed to materialize before the current congressional recess
- Provider Relief Fund Improvement Act, introduced by Senators Shaheen and Collins
 - Enhanced flexibility that would allow providers to use their PRF funds through the end of the PHE



Federal Update

COVID-19 Relief (*continued*)

- Collins/Shaheen letter to the Health Resources & Services Administration
 - Extends Period 2 reporting deadlines
 - Allows PRF funds to be used until the end of the PHE
 - Clear grassroots efforts make a difference!

Additional Relief

- **Medicare Sequester**
 - Congress did not provide relief by 4/1/22 deadline, resulting in 1% cut in Medicare reimbursement for 3 months with full 2% sequester resuming 7/1/22, resulting in an estimated \$3 billion loss in Medicare funding by the end of the year absent congressional action

New Hampshire Update

Key Issues

- Ongoing COVID-19 Response
- 2022 Legislative Session



New Hampshire Update

Ongoing COVID-19 Response

- Clear that COVID-19 will be with us for some time in one form or another
 - The hope is that we may be nearing the point where we are moving from pandemic to an endemic phase
- Hospitalizations have dropped from a high of 475 COVID hospitalizations in mid-December to between 20-40 over the past several weeks
- Masks, other mitigation measures scaling back
- But, arrival of BA2 raises many questions

New Hampshire Update

Ongoing COVID-19 Response

- Hospitals welcome the reduction in the COVID-19 burden, but they remain very busy and faced with a number of challenges:
 - Workforce, workforce, workforce...was a challenge before the pandemic, only made worse by it
 - Very busy with care for very sick, non-COVID patients...many of whom put off care during the pandemic are now much more acutely ill
 - Behavioral health crisis
 - Post-acute care discharge challenges
 - Blood shortages
- Bottom line is that hospitals will be very busy for quite some time to come

New Hampshire Update

2022 Legislative Session

- Legislature is off and running...just hit the midpoint, known as “crossover”
- Probably one of the most challenging political environments ever experienced in Concord
- Started the session with almost 50 COVID-related pieces of legislation
 - From prohibiting vaccine mandates, to allowing ivermectin to be available via a standing order and prohibitions on COVID-mitigation measures like masks.

New Hampshire Update

Healthy 603 Coalition

- Broad-based coalition of providers, business, education, arts and advocacy communities working together to combat misinformation and ensure health care policy supports the Granite State
- Working together, we have modified or shelved many bills, still much more to do
 - Vaccines...conscientious objection
 - Immunization registry: Opt-in vs Opt-out
 - Ivermectin via standing order



The COVID session: Nearly 60 coronavirus-related bills filed, about 20 still standing

BY ANNMARIE TIMMINS - APRIL 8, 2022

New Hampshire Update

Other Legislative Activity

- Workplace Safety (SB 459)
 - Result of study committee created last session
 - Focus: modify warrantless arrest statute, create workplace safety commission, and enhance data collection efforts
 - Passed Senate, now in House
- Payor Reforms (SB 320)
 - Would prohibit payors from making unilateral contract changes that had a material financial impact on providers
 - Bill sent to interim study this year...but we will be back

New Hampshire Update

Other Legislative Activity (*continued*)

- Surprise Billing (SB 287)
 - Attempt to codify the federal *No Surprise Act* in state statute
 - Some concern continues given the federal implementation
 - Passed Senate in a form we can support, now in House
- Labor/Delivery Reimbursement Rates (SB 430)
 - Would increase Medicaid facility reimbursement rates for labor/delivery services
 - Passed Senate, now in House

New Hampshire Update

- THANK YOU!
- We continue to be inspired by the tremendous work that all of you are doing to prepare for and take care of your staff and patients during this crisis...and honored to be your partners in supporting those efforts.
- Stay safe, be well.



Questions?

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HFMA Update – Vermont

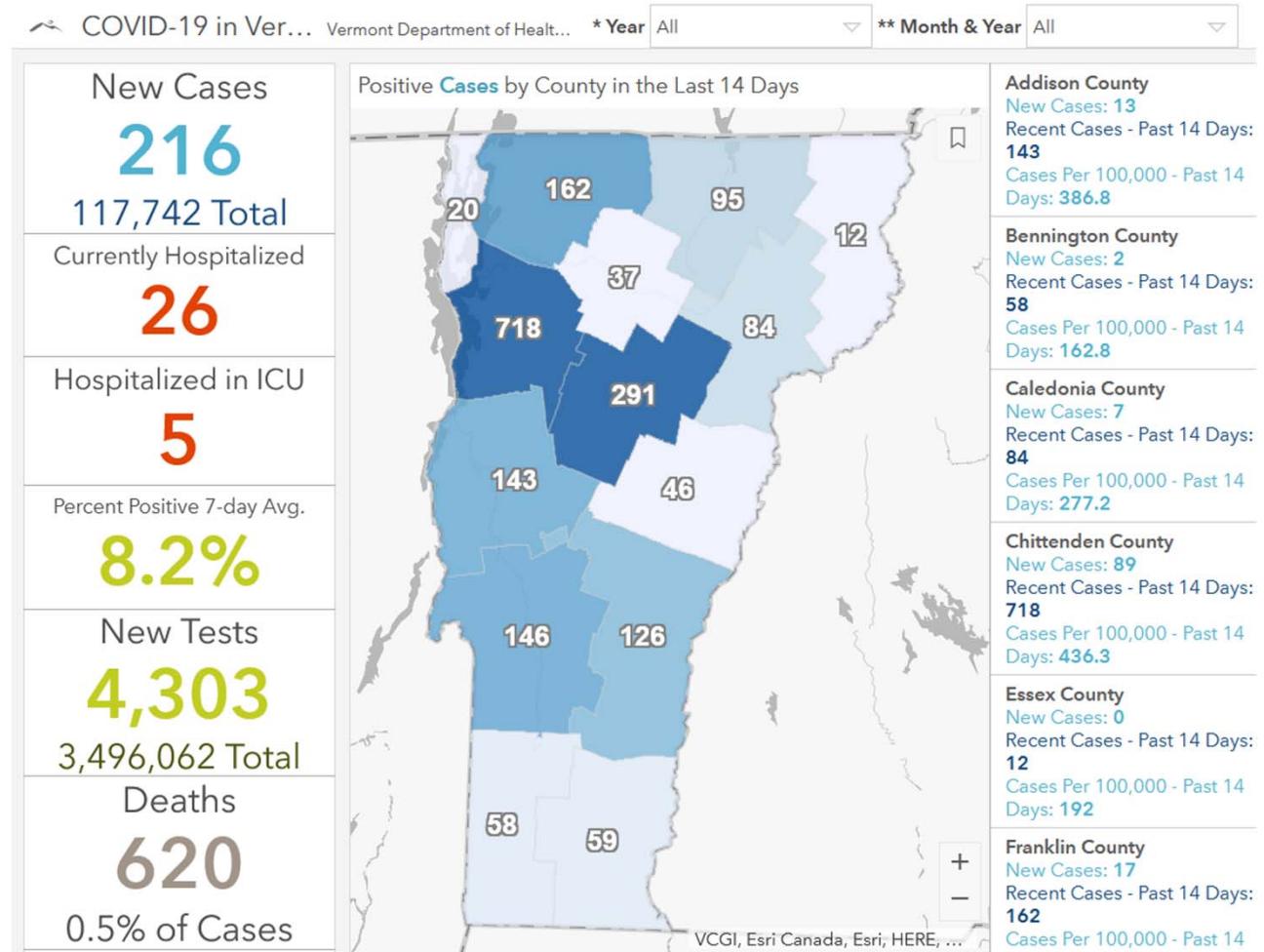
April 12, 2021

Mike Del Trecco

Sr. Vice President of Finance and Operations

Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems

- BA.2 Represents over 80% of Vermont Cases
- New Case averaging 150 this is a 16% increase from prior periods
- Hospitalizations remain low but are on the rise



Hospital Budgets

- FY 2022 financial results below budget
- Hospital target growth below health care inflation
- FY 2023 two-year guidance target of 8.6% average of 4.3%
 - Five-year average 4% vs 7% Medical Inflation
- Hospitals challenged for planning for the future

Sustainability Planning Studies

- Cost and Payment Variation
 - Discussion of hospital cost vs payment
 - Movement towards cost coverage model
- Capacity Study
 - Suggested models for hospital reform
 - Bed reallocation
- Global Budgets



Legislative

Health Care Reform

- Health Care Reform
 - S.285 proposed hospital global budgets, but has been broadened to value-based payments and includes community providers
- Wait Times - Agency of Human Services Report
 - No legislation, but administration and regulatory body looking to continue to collect more information.



Legislative

Capacity: Mental Health & Sub Acute

As with other areas of the country, Vermont's hospital system is at or past capacity

- Increase Medicaid reimbursement to sustain system, particularly in areas of hospitals, LTC facilities, and home health
- ED alternatives for psych patients for better care and ED decompression— including peer support and peer respite
- Compensate care in the ED for psych patients \$500k/year
- Statewide telepsych program



Legislative Workforce

- Legislature is supporting higher education with a goal of doubling the output of nurses
- \$2.4M to hospitals to initiate/increase preceptor incentive pay to \$5/hour
- \$3M to health care providers to develop nursing pipelines



Legislative

Regulatory Flexibility

- Legislature has extended COVID regulatory flexibilities until March 2023
 - Includes allowing providers licensed and in good standing in other states to practice in Vermont hospitals for up to 6 months without a Vermont license
 - Providers licensed and in good standing in other states can also practice telehealth if they register with the licensing authority
- Telehealth licensure
 - After 2023, a tiered and flexible approach to telehealth licensure



Legislative

Other

- Prohibition of Firearms in Hospitals signed into law
- Financial Assistance Policies - H.287, an initiative that would help standardize eligibility and allow all Vermont residents to be eligible for financial assistance policies.



Questions?



Maine Hospital Association

HFMA Update-Maine

Steven Michaud, President
Maine Hospital Association
April 12, 2022

State Legislative Issues

- COVID Status
- COVID Relief and State Budget
- Behavioral Health Funding
- Long Term Care Funding

Other State Issues

- Workforce
- Violence
- Anthem

Federal

- COVID Relief
- 340b
- Workforce

Elections---You Didn't Plan on Watching TV in the Fall Did You?

- Governor—The Epic Battle
- Congress—The Other Epic Battle
- State Legislature