



NEW HAMPSHIRE NURSES' ASSOCIATION

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The Honorable Gerald Little

Executive Director of the Governor's Office For Emergency Relief and Recovery

Sent by email to: Gerald.Little@banking.nh.gov

Dear Commissioner Little,

Thank you for providing the New Hampshire Nurses Association an opportunity to testify before the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) Committee yesterday. Nurses represent the largest cohort of healthcare workers and are on the frontline fighting for patients everyday during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We strongly urge the GOFERR Committee to provide the funding requested by the New Hampshire Hospital Association and the New Hampshire Health Care Association to support New Hampshire hospitals, long term care organizations and home care agencies. The livelihoods of nurses are inextricably linked to the financial health of New Hampshire's healthcare employers. Many nurses are experiencing a reduction in pay because of low census and have fear of more furloughs and layoffs (4.5% of survey respondents identified fear of being furloughed as their greatest concern). By providing financial support to hospitals, long term care organizations and home care agencies you are supporting New Hampshire nurses.

We also urge the GOFERR Committee to provide financial assistance to secure adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for all healthcare organizations. As Illinois Governor Pritzker stated recently, the marketplace for PPE procurement has become a "wild West." Yet, "adequate/appropriate PPE" is the single greatest concern (33.1% of over 800 responses) of the nursing community, outranking the second greatest concern by two and a half times. It is even more striking when you note that the second greatest concern (12.9% of responses) is "spreading the virus to my family;" a concern integrally related to PPE.

Finally, I failed to mention yesterday one other concern that was expressed by the vast majority of school nurses responding to our survey. This was a concern for the "mental health of my students" as a result of the closure of public schools for the balance of the school year (3.4% of all responses/17.7% of school nurse responses). New Hampshire has many "at risk" students and we urge you to consider funding requests by organizations that provide free teleconference counseling services to students experiencing mental health challenges due to distance learning, for example the Upper Room program in Derry.



You and the members of the GOFERR committee face a Solomon's task in deciding the allocation of the \$1.25 billion CARES Act funding. Thank you for taking the time to consider the perspective of the New Hampshire's nursing professionals.

Respectfully,

Joan C. Widmer, MS, MSBA, RN, CEN
Nurse Executive Director
New Hampshire Nurses Association

cc: Mr. Stephen Ahnen, New Hampshire Hospital Association
Mr. Brendan Williams, New Hampshire Health Care Association