



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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Lori A. Shíbinette
 Commissioner

Lori A. Weaver
 Deputy Commissioner

March 12, 2021

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
 State House
 Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Authorize the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Commissioner, to enter into a **Retroactive, Sole Source** contract with Alvarez & Marsal Public Sector Services, LLC (VC#333545-P001), Washington, DC, in the amount of \$1,854,286, to implement two high impact opportunities in the Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities areas resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, to improve operations, enhance service delivery, and reduce operating costs, effective retroactive to March 4, 2021, upon Governor approval through June 30, 2021. 100% Other Funds (Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery).

Funds are available in the following account for State Fiscal Year 2021:

05-95-95-950010-19290000 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, DEPT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SVCS, HHS: HUMAN SERVICES, OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER – GOFERR FUNDS

State Fiscal Year	Class / Account	Class Title	Job Number	Total Amount
2021	103-502664	Contracts for Oper Svc	95010799	\$1,854,286
			Total	\$1,854,286

EXPLANATION

This request is **Sole Source** because the Contractor is a leading global professional services firm that specializes in identifying and assisting organizations with the implementation of meaningful, cost-saving, and service enhancing recommendations. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant stress on the Department's existing service delivery model. The Contractor previously conducted a strategic assessment of the Department's operations that quantified the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Department operations and the provider community. The Contractor also identified program improvements that could increase operational efficiency and effectiveness and assessed opportunities to improve the delivery of services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on that work the Contractor made recommendations for system enhancements. Given prior involvement with these efforts, the Contractor is uniquely qualified to work with the Department through this agreement to implement high-value solutions within the necessary timeframes.

This request is **Retroactive** because the Department needed the Contractor to begin immediately to allow for adequate time to implement any cost savings recommendations to achieve them in State Fiscal Year 2021 and incorporate them into the next biennial budget cycle.

The Contractor will work with the Department to implement two high-impact opportunities stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic to improve operations, enhance service delivery, and reduce costs that include:

COVID-19 Impact on Behavioral and Mental Health: The COVID-19 pandemic has put significant stress on Americans' mental health, leading to record numbers of people citing mental health concerns. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation 41.1% of Americans reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorders in January 2021, up from just 11% between January and June of 2019. At the same time, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found in June 2020 that 10.7% of Americans had contemplated suicide – more than double the number reported in a similar 2018 survey (4.3%). The impact of the pandemic is also exacerbating the condition of people suffering from serious mental illness. A study in the Journal of American Medicine recently found that individuals suffering from schizophrenia are especially at risk of increased mortality during the pandemic.

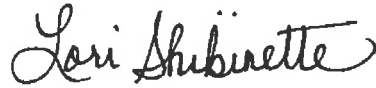
New Hampshire is no exception to this national trend. The percentage of New Hampshire citizens reporting symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorders was 27% in February 2021, more than double the percentage of Americans who reported such symptoms between January and June of 2019 (according to the Kaiser Family Foundation data referenced above). New Hampshire Hospital, after successfully reducing its extensive waiting list just before the pandemic began, has since seen the number of people waiting for admission jump to its highest levels since 2015, especially among children. Anecdotal evidence of increased mental health stress abounds in local New Hampshire press (e.g., Concord Monitor, New Hampshire Public Radio, Laconia Daily Sun).

While Americans, and citizens of New Hampshire, faced real challenges with mental health prior to the pandemic, there is abundant evidence that COVID-19 has inflamed existing issues and made a serious situation even worse. To directly respond to the increased stress of COVID-19 in NH, the Contractor will work with the Department to implement a Critical Time Intervention program and plan for, write, and submit an IMD waiver.

Developmental Disabilities: Many service programs for people with disabilities were forced to either close or reduce services to ensure safety and comply with COVID-19 social distancing regulations. These closures and reductions in services placed a significant burden on agencies and destabilized operations, which present both immediate and enduring challenges for the developmental disability system. The Contractor will engage providers to collect quantitative and qualitative data to develop a report detailing the impact COVID-19 has had on the provider community. The report will include utilization data, explain how service delivery systems have adapted, and provide detailed recommendations for system improvements. Based on the findings and recommendations, the Department will work with the Contractor to implement appropriate system solutions.

Source of Funds: 100% Other Funds – DHHS COVID RELIEF FD FR GOFERR

Respectfully submitted,



Lori A. Shibinette
Commissioner

I hereby approve this request pursuant to RSA 4:45, RSA 21-P:43, and Section 4 of Executive Order 2020-04 as extended by Executive Orders 2020-05, 2020-08, 2020-09, 2020-10, 2020-14, 2020-15, 2020-16, 2020-17, 2020-18, 2020-20, 2020-21, 2020-23, 2020-24, 2020-25, 2021-01, 2021-02, and 2021-04, and suspend the Manual of Procedures 150, V., A., 5 requirement.

3-11-21

Date



Name: Governor Christopher T. Sununu