



# STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

## Executive Council

STATE HOUSE ROOM 207

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TO: All District Three Constituents  
FROM: Executive Councilor Janet Stevens

DATE: April 9, 2024

I hosted the February 21, 2024, Executive Council meeting and was honored to nominate **Lamprey Health, a Federally Qualified Health Center, for commendation.** Lamprey Health began as a referral service in 1971 and over the past 53 years has expanded to providing comprehensive healthcare at clinics in Raymond, Newmarket, and Nashua as well as mobile health services. **In 2022, close to 64,000 patient visits were completed, for services that include - prenatal care, school-based dental care, behavioral health, substance use disorder treatment, primary care, breast and cervical cancer screenings, pediatrics, and teen health clinics.** In addition, Lamprey Health is a leader in health education and has done an exemplary job training medical assistants while also offering a nurse practitioner fellowship program. Well done Lamprey Health.

### RAISING AWARENESS ON REDUCING EXPOSURE TO LEAD

On average, 800 children in New Hampshire are poisoned from lead, typically due to exposure to lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in older buildings. According to Children's Hospital Boston – *Latent effects of lead exposure in children can affect growth, language, attention, and even IQ. Lead can affect people of all ages, but children aged 6 and younger are especially at risk, in part because their growing bodies absorb more lead.*

- The most common causes of lead poisoning are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in older buildings.
- Lead exposure can harm young children and babies — even before they are born.
- Even children that seem healthy can have high levels of lead in their bodies.
- High levels of lead may also cause [seizures](#), coma, and, in rare cases, death.
- The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) estimated that almost 500,000 children between the ages of 1 and 5 living in the United States have elevated lead levels. Approximately one out of every 25 children have dangerous levels of lead in their bloodstream. New Hampshire's action level for venous blood lead is 5 micrograms per deciliter.

Lead poisoning in young children "is entirely preventable" and I acted when I learned of the significant reduction in clinical blood lead level testing for New Hampshire children. New Hampshire is a "Universal State" for pediatric blood lead testing which mandates the testing of all children at the ages of one and two for blood lead levels. **When I reviewed testing metrics for blood lead levels and realized our three Managed Care Organizations implementing our state's Medicaid program were not in compliance - Medicaid requires all children receive blood lead screening tests at 12 months and 24 months - I went to work (see below).**

I have also been closely monitoring the three rounds of **mandatory water testing of New Hampshire's K-12 schools and licensed childcare facilities for lead levels in water outlets.** Lastly, I have been working with the NH Department of Environmental Services - to make certain that water systems are aware and accessing support for the new **U.S. EPA Lead and Copper rule, which requires water systems to map, identify lead/galvanized water lines and submit a remediation plan by October 16, 2024.**

### Only 39% of New Hampshire's Two-Year Olds Enrolled in Medicaid Tested for Lead in 2021

After reading a data brief, released in January 2023, on the risk of pediatric lead exposure in New Hampshire - the data was disconcerting. **Data analyzed from 2021 indicates that there was a 25% drop in New Hampshire children 72 months and younger who received blood lead level testing compared to testing levels in 2019.** *A myriad of factors, including pandemic-related disruptions to routine pediatric care, a nationwide recall of blood lead testing equipment, and a shortage of healthcare providers, significantly reduced pediatric blood lead testing.*

There was a disparity in blood lead level testing of children aged 12 months and 24 months enrolled in Medicaid compared to rates of their cohorts not covered by Medicaid. **For 2022 – only 39% of two-year-olds and 50% of one-year olds receiving healthcare coverage through Medicaid were tested for blood lead levels. Rates for all children in NH in 2021 were 60% for one-year olds and 51% for two-year olds.** The data indicates that across the board there has been a decline in testing for all New Hampshire children. There is no safe level of lead and lead poisoning is a preventable disease. The decline and disparity in blood lead testing – unacceptable and we must do better!

At the Executive Council - I stressed the need for both the **Public Health Services and Medicaid divisions to prioritize funding, implementation, and to increase accountability of the three Managed Care Organizations delivering Medicaid services**, by instituting performance guarantees or liquidated damages. Progress is being made in protecting our children.

New Hampshire's Medicaid contract, approved in December 2023, will go into effect on August 31, 2024. **The contract stipulates the following:** "...will measure lead testing based on the HEDIS and title XIX/XXI designations and impose financial penalties for failure to improve testing rates. New Hampshire expects improvement in testing rates based on the State requirements of blood lead screening tests at ages 12 months and 24 months. Goals will begin at

- o *fifty-five percent (55%) for 12-month olds and*
- o *forty-four percent (44%) for 24-month olds,*
- o *with incremental increases of five percent (5%) for each category annually.*
- o *At the end of the 5-year contract period, the expectation for successful testing rates will be seventy-five percent (75%) for 12-month olds and sixty-four percent (64%) for 24-month olds.*

The importance and maintenance of child wellness visits with a child's primary care provider – which include blood lead level screenings (a covered service) – is critical (see) [.LeadFreeKidsNH video for information.](#) Outside of wellness visits, families can contact their providers and discuss concerns and get an order for a lab test or request a nurse visit with their provider to get the capillary/in-office test done. Residents can contact the Healthy Homes & Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (HHLPPP) AT 603 271-4507 or [Leadinfo@dhhs.nh.gov](mailto:Leadinfo@dhhs.nh.gov)

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#### **K-12 SCHOOLS & DAYCARE CENTERS - LET'S GET THE LEAD OUT OF DRINKING WATER PROGRAM**

Per statute, beginning in 2018, all New Hampshire K-12 schools and licensed childcare centers are required to complete three rounds of testing at each water source within the facilities for lead levels. **New Hampshire's action level for lead in water is 5 parts per billion (ppb)**

The findings of the first round of testing which analyzed more than 23,525 unique water outlets in 625 schools and 594 childcare centers were released in September of 2023. The results identified more than 3,000 water outlets, in several hundred K-12 schools, in exceedance of 5 ppb with 10% at 15 ppb. **The analysis of the first round of testing indicated that 1 out of 5 childcare centers and 3 out of 5 schools had at least one water source with an exceedance of the action level of 5 ppb.** Many schools have completed round 2 of testing with the deadline for the third and final round due by June 30, 2024.

New Hampshire facilities were eligible for United States Environmental Protection Agency funds to conduct water system testing. Testing guidelines require that within 5 days of test results, facilities are required to notify families of the elevated lead levels and develop remediation plans. For the first round of testing - **more than 90% of facilities responded with remediation plans** - the majority opting to remove access to the water outlet or signage. With funding from the NH Drinking Water Groundwater Trust Fund, more than \$1 million dollars was allocated to K-12 schools and \$400,000 for licensed childcare facilities to remediate water sources containing lead above the 5 ppb action level.

I have noted five schools within District Three that have yet to implement remediation. Also of concern is one school in which close to 50% of the entire school's water sources were above 5 ppb with one water source detected at 1,130. The school did implement remediation as part of round two testing.

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#### **U.S. EPA LEAD AND COPPER RULE - INVENTORY AND REPLACEMENT PLANS DUE OCTOBER 16, 2024**

New Hampshire's 1200 water systems, of which 850 have less than 1700 water connections, must complete an inventory of water service lines - to identify lead service lines. In addition, replacement plans for lead and/or galvanized water lines must also be submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) by October 16, 2024.

For water systems with 1,700+ connections, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services has grant funding available to assist with mapping of lead lines. To date nine District Three communities applied and received grant funding totaling \$490,000 - Derry Water Dept, Exeter Water Department, Hampstead Area Water Company, Newmarket Waterworks, Portsmouth Water Works, Rye Water District, Salem Water Department, Seabrook Water Department and Aquarion Water Company of NH (Coastal)

More than \$4 million dollars in contract funding was awarded to four engineering firms to assist water systems with less than 1700 water connections to identify/map lead water lines. Of the four engineering firms assigned to assist these small water systems - Underwood Engineers(\$1,285,700); Northeast GIS (\$367,950); Arcadis (\$1,220,826); and Hazen and Sawyer(\$2,996,251) - the majority of **District Three systems have been assigned to Underwood Engineers or Northeast GIS.**

To date, very few water systems have applied for Lead Drinking Water State Revolving (DWSRF) loan funds for actual replacement of lead service because they are still identifying locations/mapping. None of the six large water systems that have received lead DWSRF loans to date - totaling \$3,455,000 dollars - are in District Three.

With six months remaining to complete I encourage municipal leaders and stakeholders to contact the NH DES or one of the four engineering firms designated to serve smaller water systems.

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The Executive Council met on **February 21, 2024 to review and vote on 193 agenda items** and to approve Civil Commissions, Nominations and Confirmations as well as Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services Nomination, Confirmations and Appointments.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**#41** Authorized the Bureau of Right-of-Way to pay property owners, tenants, and/or claimants \$24,563 as documented in the Contemplated Awards list, for amounts greater than \$5,000 for the period extending from December 16, 2023 through January 2, 2024. Effective upon G&C approval. **Derry Exit 4A - \$7,863.**

**#42** Authorized to accept and place on file the Bureau of Right-of-Way Contemplated Awards List for amount less than \$5,000, for a total of 38,876.24 for the period extending from October 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023. These awards were paid from various Transportation funds. **Plastow/Route 125 - \$1,000 and Derry/Exit 4A \$29,692 (cumulative)**

#### **OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**#49A** Authorized expenditures from the Public School Infrastructure Fund in the amount of \$9,668,202.68 for school security improvement projects with the public elementary and secondary schools as detailed in the letter dated January 17, 2024, contingent upon availability of funds per RSA 198:15-y. (2) Further authorized to repurpose funds already authorized for expenditures from the Public School Infrastructure Fund without further Fiscal Committee or Executive Council approval for school security improvement projects with the public elementary and secondary schools listed in the letter. Effective upon G&C approval through June 30, 2025. 100% Education Trust Fund. Contingent upon Fiscal Committee approval on February 16, 2024. **The following District Three Schools were approved for grant funding: Epping Elementary (\$23,468), Epping Middle/Sr High School (\$27,671), Exeter - Seacoast Technical School (\$100,000), Stratham Memorial (\$14,000), North Hampton School (\$74,500), South Hampton School (\$29,100), Winnacunnet High School (\$100,000), Raymond's Homes Gove (\$57,500) and Lamprey Elementary School (\$88,150), New Castle (\$69,000), Portsmouth's Little Harbor (\$62,120), Dondero (\$49,093), and New Franklin Schools (\$43,643), Hampton Central School (\$10,000), Pinkerton Academy (\$99,925), Great Bay Charter School (\$15,500), Hampstead Central School (\$100,000) and Pelham (\$96,310). \$1,059,980 AWARDED TO DISTRICT THREE SCHOOLS To date more than \$23,568,202 for school security improvement projects has been approved by the Executive Council in three rounds of funding.**

#### **FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT**

**#75** Authorized to accept and expend \$2,409,619 in Federal Funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the purposes related to restoring and repurposing the former Emery Estate at Glenn's Cove Wildlife Management Area to enhance public access and fulfill programmatic construction needs for the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Effective upon G&C approval through June 30, 2025. 100% Federal Funds. Contingent upon Fiscal Committee approval on February 16, 2024. (2) Further authorize the transfer of \$352,460 from the New Hampshire Fish and Game Fund Reserve to be used as matching funds for a federal grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to the Fish and Game FY 2024 Operating Budget. Effective upon G&C approval through June 30, 2025. 100% Fish and Game Funds. Contingent upon Fiscal Committee approval on February 16, 2024.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**#90** Authorized the Division of Arts to award a Conservation License Plate grant to the **Portsmouth Historical Society, Portsmouth, NH, in the amount of \$16,510** to support the conservation of the masonry at the 1812 Morton – Benedict House. Effective upon G&C approval through October 31, 2024. 100% Other Funds (Agency funds)

#92 Authorized the Division of Parks and Recreation to enter into a contract with GEI Consultants, Inc., Portland, ME, in the amount of **\$150,000 to conduct a feasibility study to improve accessibility for people with disabilities at Hampton Beach State Park**. Effective upon G&C approval through November 30, 2024. 100% General Funds

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#### DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

#94 Authorized to enter into a sole source agreement with the University of New Hampshire, Sponsored Program Administration, Durham, NH, in the amount of **\$42,752 to perform laboratory analysis of seawater samples to identify and quantify harmful algae cells**. Effective upon G&C approval through March 31, 2025. 100% General Funds

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#101 Authorized to enter into a contract with **Underwood Engineers, Inc., Portsmouth, NH, in the amount of \$308,961** in order to conduct a seacoast interconnection study for public drinking water systems. Effective upon G&C approval through December 31, 2025. 100% Federal Funds

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#103 **Authorized to retroactively amend an American Rescue Plan Act grant to the City of Portsmouth** (originally approved by G&C on 1/18/23, Item #91), NH, by extending the completion date from December 31, 2023 to June 30, 2025, for the **Fleet Street Roadway Reconstruction** Phase I project. Effective upon G&C approval. This is a no cost time extension. 100% Federal Funds

#111 **Authorize a Drinking Water Revolving Fund loan agreement with the Town of Newmarket, NH, in the amount not to exceed \$1,446,000 to finance water system improvements** under the provisions of RSA 486:14 and NH Code of Administrative Rules Env-Dw 1100 et seq. Effective upon G&C approval. 87.34% Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund BIL Funds, 12.66% General Funds

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#115 Authorized Wild Rose Lane LLC's request to amend NH Department of Environmental Services Wetland Bureau (originally approved by G&C on 10/13/21, Item #69), to **perform work on Piscataqua River in Portsmouth, NH**.

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#### PUBLIC SAFETY

#140 Authorized the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, to accept and expend Federal Fiscal Year 2023 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Congressional Community Project funds in the amount of **\$500,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the Pierce Island Road Resiliency Project in the City of Portsmouth, NH**. (2) Further authorize to transfer Pre-Disaster Mitigation funds in and among classes within an accounting unit, in the amount of \$103,250 for better use of appropriated federal funds. Effective upon G&C approval through June 30, 2025. 100% Federal Funds. Contingent upon Fiscal Committee approval on February 16, 2024.

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#146 Authorized the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to enter into a grant agreement with the **City of Portsmouth, NH, for a total amount of \$724,000** to support the elevation of Pierce Island Roadway. Effective upon G&C approval through September 27, 2026. 100% Federal Funds

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#### CONFIRMATIONS

Board of Nursing  
Board of Nursing (Public Member)  
Board of Septic System Evaluators (Sewage Disposal System Installer)  
Director of the Div of Travel & Tourism Development,  
    Department of Business & Economic Affairs  
Justice, New Hampshire Circuit Court  
New Hampshire Motor Vehicle Industry Board  
Pharmacist II, Department of Corrections  
State Fire Marshal, Department of Safety  
Volunteer New Hampshire Board of Directors (Religious Community)

(RN) Matthew Kitsis, Bow  
Samantha L. O'Neil, Merrimack  
Mark E. McConkey, Freedom  
Lori Harnois, Concord

Sarah D. Christie, Newbury  
Paula M. Hiuser, Laconia  
Brenda Bailey, Hopkinton  
Sean Toomey, Warner  
Joanne Randall, Epsom



## NOMINATIONS

Board of Athletic Trainers  
Board of Foresters (Public Member)  
Board of Home Inspectors (Home Inspector)  
Board of Licensed Dietitians  
Board of Septic System Evaluators (Sewage Disposal System Designer)  
Chief Operations Officer, Department of Environmental Services  
Director of the Division of Administration, Department of Energy  
Justice, New Hampshire Circuit Court  
Poet Laureate

Cassandra Snow, Manchester  
Colleen M. O'Neill, Cornish  
Jared P. Piotrowski, Canterbury  
Allison M. Bradley, Northfield  
Michael Carbonneau Jr., Littleton  
Susan Carlson, Bow  
Rorie E. Patterson, Concord  
Laura E. B. Lombardi, Concord  
Jennifer Militello, Goffstown



***Pictured above:** The Timberlane Fiddlers, from Timberlane Regional High School in Plaistow, NH, performed for the Governor and Executive Council at the 2/21/2024 meeting. **Pictured below:** District 3 Executive Councilor, Janet Stevens stands with a Conservation Officer with The New Hampshire Fish & Game at the Governor and Executive Council meeting on 2/21/2024.*

