



State of New Hampshire Commission on Aging

2020 ANNUAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

November 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020

Each year more of us are living longer and, in many cases, better lives. The Granite State, where one out of every five of us is over the age of 60, has the second-oldest population in the nation. In response, during the 2019 legislative session, the New Hampshire State Commission on Aging was established to advise the Governor and the General Court on policy and planning related to aging. The goal is to ensure that all of us in New Hampshire have the opportunity to thrive as we age and continue to make valuable contributions to our families, communities, and state.

The Commission on Aging spent its first year developing a [strategic approach](#) to investigate issues focused on improving how we age. The Commission also responded to emergent concerns related to the COVID-19. Social isolation, exacerbated by the pandemic both within long-term care facilities and the larger community, became a priority issue for the Commission.

The [Commission on Aging 2020 Annual Report](#) summarizes the previous year's activities and makes seven recommendations for consideration by policy leaders in New Hampshire:

1. Conduct an in-depth assessment of the Long-Term System of Care that studies the built environment, workforce, funding, nursing home alternatives, rebalancing payment structures to better support long-term supports and services delivered in the community, and more. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 Governor Sununu announced the formation of a working group to look at long-term care issues. Make this a top priority again when the present state of emergency subsides. A case for a more resilient system of care was never more evident than during this pandemic. In the meantime:
 - Seek ways to support the growth of the quantity and quality of the home care and long-term care facility workforce in New Hampshire by:
 - Focusing on recruitment, training and retention strategies; and
 - Prioritizing aid to long-term care facilities to retain their workforce through the state of emergency. A full, qualified workforce is a key element in creating safe environments that deliver quality care for all of us as we age.
 - Hold hearings and sponsor discussions for nursing home providers, public health officials, and the public about the dangers to older adults of being socially isolated, and how to assess for and remedy isolation.
2. Continue to find ways to increase funding for Nutrition Support Services, i.e. Meals on Wheels, in New Hampshire.
3. Consider investing in a statewide assessment of older adults' transportation needs to inform a smart approach to infrastructure development.
4. Consider efforts to increase housing affordable to older adults and the care provider workforce.
 - When considering housing, simultaneously consider availability of nearby transportation options to ensure New Hampshire resources are used in a maximally efficient way.
5. Revisit Right-to-Know laws to allow for the continuation of public meetings via remote means beyond the conditions of a declared state of emergency.

6. Continue efforts to sustain growth of telehealth services beyond the current state of emergency. Telehealth’s growth during the COVID-19 pandemic has been beneficial to older adults in both urban and rural areas.
7. Support the development of a statewide vision for and investment in high speed broadband infrastructure to help our state thrive. Consider maintaining a Director of Broadband Services after the upcoming retirement of the current Director.

The NH State Commission on Aging will continue to investigate how all of us can have the opportunity to thrive and be valued while growing older in New Hampshire in the years to come.

Full Report Available at: https://nhcoa.nh.gov/documents/COA_2020_ANNUAL_REPORT_FINAL_DRAFT.pdf

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State of New Hampshire Commission on Aging

Vision

All people have the opportunity to thrive and be valued while growing older in New Hampshire.

Mission

To be a catalyst for change that values, serves, and celebrates people as they grow older.

3 Year Strategic Priorities

October 2020-September 2023

Develop and advance strategies to improve people’s ability to age in the communities of their choice

Year 1 objectives:

- Objective to be developed by Task Force and approved by full Commission.

Catalyze New Hampshire towards being an Age-Friendly State

Year 1 objectives:

- Meet with leadership of age-friendly community initiatives to learn what supports from a state level would be beneficial to their goals.
- Request leadership of at least one state agency to come to the State Commission to discuss how they plan to incorporate the impact of aging demographics in their strategic planning by March 2021.

Engage Leaders regarding the Emerging Needs of Older Adults during the COVID-19 Epidemic

Year 1 objectives:

- Engage key stakeholders and subject matter experts on emerging needs in order to bring forward recommendations for action to the full Commission.

Develop Commission Infrastructure to Support Operational Success

Year 1 objectives:

- Create Task Forces in alignment with 3 year plan to develop objectives and strategies by November 2020.
- Help members of the Commission be effective by clarifying terms, defining roles and expectations and developing an onboarding process for new members of the Commission by January 2021.
- Develop Commission processes for advising the Legislature and Governor on current legislation and recommendations for future public policy by June 2021.

Values

Forward Thinking – We anticipate the future and are creative and innovative finding new ways forward.

Collaboration – We embrace cooperation as complex issues require multiple perspectives for development of meaningful solutions and collective action.

Public Trust - We pursue common good in ways that are respectful, accountable, transparent, equitable, and worthy of trust.

Stewardship – We seek to maximize benefit from New Hampshire resources.

Expertise – We utilize the wealth of knowledge and skills available within our state agencies, businesses, and communities.

Opportunity – We strive to amend systematic patterns of disadvantage and marginalization so that all have the opportunity to thrive while growing older.

Engagement - We aim to leverage the talents and energy of older people in New Hampshire to create a better future.