



HOUSE RESOURCES, RECREATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

February 4, 2020

HB 1425-FN – Requiring the Removal of all Containers Containing PFAS Compounds from Public School and Hospitals

Testimony

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Paula Minnehan, Senior VP, State Government Relations with the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA), representing all 26 of the state's community hospitals as well as all specialty hospitals.

The NHHA has concerns with HB 1425-FN, as introduced. My comments will be directed at the section that focuses on hospitals – Page 2, line 5. It is unclear to us why hospitals are specifically targeted, along with public schools regarding the sale, distribution for sale, or distribute for use packaging with PFAS chemicals. Hospitals are private health care institutions. While they are large and utilize a lot of materials and services, we do not believe it is appropriate to single out these institutions in the manner that this bill proposes.

Hospitals are certainly supportive of any efforts the Department of Environmental Services conducts to identify safer alternatives to perfluoroalkyl polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) where they exist.

Hospitals have instituted a variety of voluntary efforts aimed at reducing the amount of chemicals used in all manners of their industry through many initiatives to reduce, reuse and recycle the things they use in their facilities.

For example, they have changed their purchasing practices to include less toxic disinfectants, cleaning chemicals and patient products free of mercury, PVCs, (polyvinyl chlorides) and DEHPs (di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalates). They have also widely implemented integrated pest management (IPM) and chosen interior furnishings without formaldehydes, flame retardants and PVCs. New Hampshire hospitals continuously strive to minimize or eliminate, wherever possible, the use of harmful chemicals to reduce potentially harmful exposures to their patients, staff, visitors, and the communities they serve.

One challenge that they are facing is related to the reduction of Styrofoam in their facilities. In an effort to reduce/eliminate the use of Styrofoam products they have moved to the food packaging that is cardboard-like but has PFAS in them. There are other bills that the legislation is considering this session that aims to eliminate Styrofoam use in businesses. Hospitals are challenged to eliminate all these products in the most efficient and effective way possible when there are very few alternatives available.

If the committee chooses to move forward with this legislation, we ask that hospitals be exempted from the prohibitions outlined in the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. I am happy to answer any questions.