



**Senate Education Committee**

**January 23, 2018**

**SB 357 - Relative to Safe School Zones**

**Testimony**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Paula Minnehan and I am the Vice President of State Government Relations at the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA), representing all 26 of the state's community hospitals as well as all of our specialty hospitals. Joining me today is Peter Wright, President & Chief Executive Officer of Valley Regional Healthcare in Claremont, NH.

The New Hampshire Hospital Association is not taking a position on SB 357. We are interested in the bill, however, since the bill addresses the Safe School Zones. As you know, the Syringe Service Program (SSP) was established when SB 234 was passed in 2017. There is a prohibition in the Needle Exchange Program law that prohibits a SSP from being located within a drug-free school zone as defined in RSA 193-B:1, II.

We are here today to request a friendly amendment to the Drug Free School Zone prohibition to allow for a SSP to be established in a hospital. The amendment would modify the prohibition to read as follows: **"Exceptions to this prohibition may be granted by the applicable school district superintendent when a request is initiated by a syringe service program administrator."**

Mr. Wright is joining me today to share with you his experience in Claremont when they attempted to open up the first SSP in NH last summer at Valley Regional Hospital.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our comments with you and to request an amendment to the bill before you to assist in the establishment of safe syringe service programs in NH. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.