



**HOUSE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND ELDERLY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**April 24, 2019**

**SB 111 – Relative to the collection of health care data**

**Testimony**

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Kathy Bizarro-Thunberg, Executive Vice President for the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA), and I am here representing all 26 of our state's community hospitals as well as all specialty hospitals.

NHHA supports SB 111. This bill covers both the collection and the release of health care data collected by NH DHHS. The collection of health care data from acute care and specialty hospitals, also currently known as the Uniform Healthcare Facilities Discharge Data Set (UHFDDS), and informally known as hospital discharge data, has been around since 1985, the year I started as a Data Technician with the New Hampshire Hospital Association. I have been intimately involved with the UHFDDS system since its origins. I do want to disclose to this committee that NHHA is currently the contractor for NH DHHS to collect the UHFDDS data from all hospitals. And to be clear, that contract does not allow NHHA automatic access to the data. There are strict restrictions in our contract from accessing the data that we collect on the Department's behalf. There is a separate process for requesting access to the hospital discharge data.

Hospitals, public health and researchers have long utilized the hospital discharge data for market analyses, disease monitoring, longitudinal health studies, and more to improve access to care, develop new services needed by our patients and improve our public health system. Access to the hospital discharge data is governed by state law, state administrative rules as well as the privacy regulations of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). Great care is taken by NH DHHS to ensure that all privacy restrictions and allowable releases are followed. We believe the bill, as amended by the Senate, provides consistency and clarity to the intersections between state law, regulations and HIPAA and improves access to the hospital discharge data.

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