NHPHA Leadership Message: Celebrating NHPHA

Gail Tudor, NHPHA Board President

For NHPHA, 2021 was a year of working to maintain our mission of championing public health policy and practice, enriching the workforce, and inspiring leaders to improve the public’s health while undergoing our leadership changes.

The first four months saw NHPHA without an executive director, with the executive committee led by then board president, Lisa Bujno, running the association. The focus was on updating bylaws and policies while continuing with day-to-day activities. NHPHA continued to support public health efforts, especially the worsening disparity and food insecurity issues. A primary 2021 goal for the New Hampshire Food Access Coalition (FAC), a coalition of NH stakeholders across the food system facilitated by the NHPHA, was building internal and external relationships to increase capacity for advocacy. The coalition has spent the year tracking bills, advocating, and testifying. NHPHA also continued to support and assist with the COVID Equity Task Force, a collective representing multiple sectors and communities, engaged in advocating for equitable vaccine distribution by ensuring that the COVID-19 vaccine reaches those disproportionately affected based on geography, the Social Vulnerability Index, or another index.

In May, NHPHA announced its newest initiative, a NH Immunization Alliance, VaxWell NH. VaxWell NH has completed its initial branding project, including briefing sessions, a stakeholder survey, interviews, and a peer audit. Its mission is to reduce vaccine-preventable disease by increasing immunization rates.

In July, NHPHA announced that we had signed an agreement with The Nature Conservancy to work with them and other partners to develop a new coalition promoting the interconnection between climate change and public health. This work includes creating and promoting messaging that supports and describes the importance of this interconnection to the health and wellness of NH.

In the spring and summer, NHPHA began a growth period by hiring a new Executive Director, April Mottram, followed by Melissa Bernardin as our Advocacy and Program Coordinator and Ellen Smith Ahern as the Immunization Program Coordinator. These positions were made possible by the award of several new grants. In addition, we had three interns work with us in 2021, all MPH students from local universities.

Our Annual Meeting in April was our first foray into hosting our virtual meeting. On April 21st, close to 100 participants joined Zoom to learn about building community resilience after COVID-19, participate in conversations about NHPHA’s policy priority areas, view student poster presentations, network, and support our awards winners. The virtual Team Up Take Action (TUTA) conference in November, in partnership with the Vermont Public Health Association and the New England Public Health Training Center, was very successful, thanks to the efforts of our staff and board volunteers. Keynote speakers and participants discussed the current challenges of the public health infrastructure in New Hampshire and Vermont as exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In October, our fourth cohort of mentees began the Mentor Program with 15 mentee-mentor pairs. The end of December saw the resignation of our executive director and a return to NHPHA being led by a fiercely loyal and dedicated executive committee.

To continue to move forward as an association and as a community, promoting public health and its mission, we rely on our members. It is your voice that highlights needed changes and helps move forward public health policy. It is your expertise and dedication that continues to provide effective public health programs. It is your participation that makes NHPHA stronger, increases our impact, and drives our vision to be a trusted public health voice that empowers our members, partners, community, and decision-makers to achieve a healthier and more equitable, and just NH. Thank you for all you do, and let’s continue to work together towards this vision.

Gail Tudor, PhD
Board President
New Hampshire Public Health Association

NHPHA 2021 Achievements

- Maintained a focused advocacy presence at the State House and communicated through our Health in All Policy newsletter
- Co-hosted our sixth successful Team Up, Take Action conference in collaboration with the Vermont Public Health Association
- Held our fourth annual lobbying and advocacy primer for nonprofits in partnership with New Futures
- Graduated our third cohort of the NHPHA Public Health Mentor Program and started our fourth cohort
- Provided stipends to several interns for diverse public health projects
- Hosted our second annual public health career webinar for students and early career professionals
- Staffed the new VaxWell Immunization Coalition, focused on vaccination issues in New Hampshire
- Continued to expand our funding base
- Signed an agreement with the Nature Conservancy to work together to develop a new coalition promoting the interconnection between climate and public health
- Continued to support the COVID-19 Equity Task Force that we launched in conjunction with the DHHS Office of Health Equity and NH Division of Public Health Services

Funders

NHPHA and the Oral Health Coalition want to thank our funders for their generosity and support!

- CareQuest Institute
- Community Health Institute/JSI
- Health Resources & Services Administration
- New England Public Health Training Center
- NH Charitable Foundation
- NH Children’s Health Foundation
- NH Endowment for Health
- NH Occupational Health Surveillance Program
- Northeast Delta Dental
- Oral Health Progress Equity Network
- The Nature Conservancy

Public Health Academic Members

- Colby-Sawyer College
- Keene State College
- Rivier University
- Southern New Hampshire University
- University of New Hampshire
APHA Update
Nancy Frank, NHPHA Board Secretary

NHPHA is one of 54 state and regional public health associations that serve as affiliates to the American Public Health Association (APHA). The NHPHA and its members benefit from this affiliation through several activities that take place throughout the year, including continuing education, advocacy related opportunities, and resources.

The 2021 APHA Annual Meeting and Expo was held in Denver in October. It was a hybrid model, allowing many who were unable to attend in person to participate virtually. Over 10,000 public health professionals we able to share and network in Denver and online. The theme of the meeting was “Creating the Healthiest Nation: Strengthening Social Connectedness.” Some of the primary topics covered were Health Inequities, Racism as a Public Health Crisis, Advocacy in the Current Political Climate, and the Effects of Climate Change on Health.

APHA sponsors numerous events throughout the year that focus on the critical work of public health and public health professionals. On November 22, 2021 APHA, Research!America, and leading public health organizations recognized public health professionals who work tirelessly every day to protect the health of all people and communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new attention to the importance of public health and the debt of gratitude we owe to all public health professionals.

As the NHPHA affiliate representative, NHPHA Board Member Nancy Frank serves on the APHA Governing Council and contributes to governance activities, review and approval of various policy statements, and assessment of the financial status of the organization. Additionally, NHPHA joins the other New England states (CT, ME, MA, RI, VT) in a regional Council of Affiliates, which provides opportunities to share issues and best practices and learn from our neighboring states.

### NHPHA Financials

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<td>201,523.03</td>
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Thank you to our generous sponsors, the TUTA 2021 planning and programming teams, and all the staff members who made our sixth annual Team Up, Take Action (TUTA) conference, titled “Envisioning an Equitable Future through Public Health Strategies,” a great success. The TUTA conference was held virtually on November 4, 2021, in partnership with the Vermont Public Health Association and the New England Public Health Training Center. Over one hundred people registered and approximately 50 attended. The keynote speakers were Patricia Tilley, the Director of the NH Division of Public Health Services and Mark Levine, MD Commissioner of Health, Vermont Department of Health. Both spoke on the current challenges of the public health infrastructure in their state as exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and where we need to improve. Afterwards participants engaged in lively Q & A as well as discussion and idea sharing in facilitated breakout groups. The action items that resulted from the breakout groups fell within the following areas:

- Collect data broken down by social determinants and make accessible.
- Create a universal EMR focused on health outcomes.
- Create a model to bring together community partners and increase their voice/power.
- Form multi-sector collaborations to improve how money spent, joint programming, more efficient holistic care (i.e., encourage more community-based programs – avoid passing customers from one organization to the next, need one stop shopping and support them through it all – and the funding model to support it).
- Provide and encourage cultural competence training.
- Improve government trust and re-establish the view of public health in a positive way.
- Leverage legal and marketing professionals to be more creative in our messaging and communication.

Both the NHPHA and VTPHA plan on providing webinars and meetings within their own states to continue the discussion and move forward with these action items.

**Membership Committee**

**Lisabritt Solsky, Membership Committee Co-Chair**

As was the case last year, the membership committee has struggled due to limitations imposed by the pandemic. The initiative to encourage hospitals to become members did not yield strong results. Once again, board members are reaching out to lapsed organizational members with whom they have relationships to encourage renewal.

The NHPHA continues to refine its messaging to have a more broad-based appeal, especially as COVID has put public health front and center. The membership committee believes that ‘if you are a member of the public, you are a stakeholder in public health.' Co-Chair Lisabritt Solsky Stevens attended communications and other committee meetings to align on messaging. The committee continues to refine and simplify value proposition framing for member development.

With our new executive director, the committee structure is under discussion. Membership recruitment, cultivation, and stewardship may become part of lights on work for staff rather than a board committee. No final decisions have been made as yet.
ROGER FOSSUM LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Kenneth Norton, Former Executive Director
NAMI NH

Nenneth "Ken" Norton is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker. He served as the Executive Director of NAMI NH, the NH Chapter of the National Alliance On Mental Illness, and led the development of NAMI NH’s Connect Suicide Prevention program, a national best practice in suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention which has provided training across the US, in over 25 tribal nations, and six countries. Ken has participated on numerous commissions and workgroups in NH, including the Governor’s Law Enforcement Accountability, Community and Transparency, Governor’s School Safety Committee, the NH Suicide Prevention Council, and national committees, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. He has served as a subject matter expert for SAMSHA, the Department of Defense, and the Veterans Administration and presented nationally and internationally on subjects related to mental illness, suicide, and media/messaging. Ken has worked in community mental health, served as a licensed foster parent, and has lived experience as a family member with: mental illness, addiction, and suicide.

PRESIDENT’S AWARD

Lisa Bujno, Assistant Medical Director
Ammonoosuc Community Health Services

Lisa Bujno is the Assistant Medical Director at Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, a Federally Qualified Health Center. Ms. Bujno is a family nurse practitioner who has actively practiced in clinical settings, including three New England FQHCs. She previously worked at the New Hampshire’s Division of Public Health Services (DPHS), where she served in various roles, most recently as Deputy Director of the Division. At DPHS, Ms. Bujno worked with several dedicated public health staff to direct key community- and population-based health programs that have improved the health of New Hampshire’s residents.

Ms. Bujno has mentored nursing and public health students from educational institutions such as Southern New Hampshire University, the University of New Hampshire, and the Dartmouth Institute. She has served on many non-profit boards, including the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs, the New Hampshire Public Health Association, the Citizens Health Initiative Leadership Advisory Board, and the New Hampshire Children’s Health Foundation. Her leadership and clinical experiences and her history of commitment to protecting the public’s health have given her a unique perspective on public health, healthcare, and health policy issues.
NH COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE AWARD

John Soucy, LICSW
Senior Vice President of Children’s Services, Easter Seals

John graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 1991 and is a 1994 graduate of Boston College Graduate School of Social Work. He has been a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker since 2005 and has focused his training on treating adults and children who have experienced trauma. He has worked in intensive-level residential and educational treatment facilities for children and young adults for the last 31 years. He has also managed intensive substance abuse treatment programs for adolescents and adult women and their children. John joined Easter Seals in 2009 and is the Senior Vice President of Children's Services. His responsibilities include Gammon Academy, the Child Development Centers, Early Intervention and Supports, Autism Services, and Camp Sno-Mo.

FRIEND OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

Robert Friedlander, Founder and Board Chair NH Healthcare Workers for Climate Action

Robert "Bob" Friedlander Jr., MD, is the Founder and Board Chair for NH Healthcare Workers for Climate Action, which is a grassroots and nonpartisan coalition of diverse healthcare workers that come together to educate and mobilize colleagues, patients, family members, community members, and policy-makers in support of climate solutions to improve health for all. As a physician, Bob focused his clinical and research roles on the human connections between patients, family members, and physicians. In his volunteer life, his long-standing interest in active listening, personal narratives, community organizing, and working with diverse populations led to the founding of Innisfree Cancer Help of NH, an interdisciplinary supportive care program, and Healthcare Voices of NH, a grassroots, independent and nonpartisan COVID-19 vaccine trust-building campaign. Bob is a graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, Yale College, and Weill Cornell Medicine.

RAAGA DEVINENI EQUITY AND JUSTICE AWARD

Allyson Ryder
Assistant Director - Community, Equity and Diversity, UNH

Allyson Ryder has held roles in a variety of capacities to advance social justice, human solidarity, and liberation. She is an educator, facilitator, advocate, and curriculum designer who seeks to bring compassion and connection into the work.

Her primary roles have been focused on racial equity, LGBTQ rights, and gender equality. She serves as Board Treasurer for The Black Heritage Trail of NH and as a board member and Affiliate Equity Officer for the ACLU of NH. In her free time, Allyson loves being outdoors with her wife and their two dogs.
Kelsi West, BS, MPH Candidate, is a Project Director at the UNH Institute for Health Policy and Practice (IHPP). She joined the Delivery System and Payment Reform team in April 2018 and is currently the Project Manager for the UNH Project ECHO Hub, where she oversees the ECHO programs launched through the University. She works on various projects focusing on workforce development, chronic disease management, health policy, and telehealth. Kelsi assists with project management, data analysis, contracting, and event coordination for IHPP. Before joining the team, Kelsi worked as a Reimbursement Analyst at Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine, where she worked on Medicare Cost Reporting and data collection. Kelsi is also in her final semester of her Master of Public Health program at the University of New Hampshire.

RISING STAR AWARD

Kelsi West, Project Director
UNH Institute for Health Policy and Practice

2021 Organizational Members

Alice Peck Day
Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc.
Bi-State Primary Care Association
Breathe NH
Cheshire Medical Center
Colby-Sawyer College
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Endowment for Health
Foundation for Healthy Communities
Gather
Granite United Way
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation
Keene State College
Louis Karno & Co. Communications
Makin' It Happen (MIH)
New Futures
New Hampshire Children's Health Foundation
NH Division of Public Health Services
NH Hunger Solutions
NH Pediatric Society
North Country Health Consortium
Partnership for Public Health
Rivier University
Safe Kids New Hampshire
Southern New Hampshire University
Southern NH Area Health Education Center
UNH MPH
Unite Us
2021 showed us that statewide access to affordable and equitable oral health and dental services remains a goal, leading us to focus on increasing access through interactive multidisciplinary trainings aimed at by providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

In 2021, our annual NH Oral Health Forum was held virtually, opening the door to speakers and attendees from throughout New England and the nation. Dr. Glen Hansen, DDS, PhD, Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology in the School of Dentistry at the University of Utah, spoke about his FLOSS program emphasizing “The Healing Power of a Smile: Connections Between Oral Health and Substance Use Disorder,” a study identifying outcomes that showed that patients in recovery that received care from a comprehensive oral health program were 50% more likely to complete substance recovery treatment; 55% less likely to be homeless after discharge from substance treatment discharge; and 300% more likely to find employment at the time of discharge.

Additionally, Hansen reported that as providers, dental students were interested and eager to participate in the dental treatment that was pivotal in improving patients’ quality of life. Hansen’s presentation was offset by a local NH panel featuring instate programs on substance misuse, dental and recovery access, and related treatment with speakers from local treatment and human service programs. Due to popular demand, Dr. Hansen and a local team will present again this spring.

On the theme of increased access, the Coalition and stakeholders continued to focus advocacy campaigns for the passage of a comprehensive NH State Adult Dental Medicaid Benefit. Despite passage for the benefit in 2019, funding was not provided in 2021.

With strong support from Governor Sununu and the NH Legislature, the benefit is expected to pass with funding in 2022 for implementation in 2023, culminating in 2 decades of collaboration. The challenge for 2023 will be establishing an adequate and sufficient dental provider network. For more information: gbrown@nhoralhealth.org or on our website at: www.nhoralhealth.org.
In February, the NHPHA Public Health Mentor Program met for a presentation by Southern NH University Director of Diversity Programs, Kayla Page, who spoke with the group about defining, reflecting, and working toward cultural integration. Mentors have helped mentees with job applications, mock interviews, networking opportunities for mentees with their colleagues, and guidance through professional and personal changes as we all adjusted our plans due to Covid-19. The day ended with an opportunity for mentees to get to know other mentors and make additional professional connections.

The Mentor Program was able to come together in early March for training with Jess Wojenski of New Futures to learn more about how policy impacts daily life, how policy change occurs, and what advocacy is. The training also included information about the New Hampshire Legislature, why the NH legislature is unique, and how your voice can make a difference. We then went over advocacy skills: how to be an effective advocate, including best practices and advice on common ways of advocating.

In the Spring of 2021, NHPHA sought to support students graduating within the next few months through our Workforce Development initiatives. In April, NHPHA presented for the second year a Virtual Career Panel geared toward students, recent graduates, and early career professionals looking to learn more about public health careers. The panel was facilitated by Gail Tudor, NHPHA Board President and Associate Dean of public health programs at Southern New Hampshire University, and featured Victoria Adewumi, MA, Community Liaison, Manchester Health Department; Chelsey Canavan, MSPH, Population Health, Dartmouth-Hitchcock; Megan DeNubila, MPH Public and Partner Communications Branch Director, COVID-19 Response, Provider/Relations/Public Health Education and Detailing Program Manager, Infectious Disease Prevention, Investigation & Care Services, New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services; and Samuel Harris, MPH, Environmental Health Data Analyst, New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services. Panelists described public health career trajectories and the types of diverse public health careers that exist within the state and walked students through their career trajectories and their current positions. Finally, they offered students feedback about getting where they want to go in their career, suggesting fellowships and internships opportunities, networking tactics to try, and recommended leadership and communication approaches to make students notable in the field one day.

In May, the mentors and mentees came together for their final meeting and celebrated graduations and new jobs. Mentees provided feedback on the program and topics they would like to see added in the future.
Having developed our mission, website and initial objectives, we are now refining our structure and strategy. Members are currently organizing into two working groups: Education & Outreach seeks to advance immunizations through strategic resource-sharing and supportive partnerships with existing coalitions/organizations statewide, while Coalition Building is focused on advancing VaxWell itself, through recruitment, thoughtful messaging and multiple forms of advocacy, including:

- Publishing an Op Ed in support of the Protecting Seniors Through Immunizations Act
- Contributing insight to NHPHA’s review of immunization-related bills in the State Legislative Session 2022
- Sharing out and responding to action alerts from partners like New Futures’ Campaign for a Healthy NH

VaxWell strives to approach this work through an equity lens, supporting and amplifying the voices of partners who serve New Hampshire’s most vulnerable populations, from rural, underserved communities in the North Country to communities of refugees and immigrants concentrated in our cities. While folks across the state face common barriers to vaccination, such as limited public transportation, complicated bureaucracy, unsupportive workplace policies and widespread health misinformation, varied experiences of race, ethnicity, gender and poverty also intersect to shape education and access to immunizations. Families and communities are impacted differently by vaccine-preventable illnesses, so naturally, we need different resources and messaging to engage everyone equitably in public health. The goal is for VaxWell to convene as many of these diverse voices and vaccine campaigns as possible, to build awareness around the work already being done and to support future growth.
Climate Change and Health Partnership

Melissa Bernardin, NHPHA

NHPHA received grant funding in mid-2021 to support programming that highlights the intersection and importance of climate change to public health outcomes in NH. Over the course of the summer and fall, key stakeholders met to discuss similar initiatives in other states and groundwork to gather research on evidence-based interventions. Other necessary first steps were to develop a contact list of key stakeholders, discuss the work of other climate and health outcome coalition work in the state, and identify available resources and messaging related to this work.

In 2021, NHPHA pivoted toward planning a workgroup series to bring public health professionals together to discuss climate impacts on health and investigate tangible steps. The idea emerged to host a listening session in Spring 2022 on how climate change affects public health in New Hampshire. Virtual workgroups would follow that session to implement ideas generated during the listening session. This includes a second meeting to discuss ways to operationalize the communication of key concepts and wrap up with a session focused on the structure and implementation of an initiative to communicate important educational and advocacy themes around climate and health.

NHPHA also attended the public launch of Healthcare Workers for Climate Action, co-sponsored their online educational programming, and participated in the Climate and Health working group of the COVID Equity Task Force.

COVID-19 Equity Task Force

Trinidad Tellez, MD

The COVID-19 Equity Task Force was originally convened in March of 2020 to respond to the community needs arising from the COVID pandemic. The Task Force has met regularly - semi-monthly since July 2020 - with 40-60 individuals consistently participating, and new participants joining regularly.

The Task Force is organized around work groups addressing areas of concern identified from the recognition of shared community needs, including: concerns related to immigrants, digital divide and education, food insecurity, mental health and substance use, older adults and people with disabilities, and climate and environment equity. As needs have changed, some work groups have been retired and other new groups have been added.

Work group members collaboratively develop action steps to address needs and disparities that have been magnified by the pandemic. Work is intended to be developed as a collective and to formulate policy and/or system change responses in each area, including addressing long-term needs and implications. The task force intentionally centers the value of equity. Participants are led with equity promoting participatory processes to address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus outbreak on communities that are already experiencing marginalization.

In addition to work group breakouts the task force meetings also include collective policy updates and often a topical presentation from guest speakers on issues of interest to members; these presentations have been recorded since June 2021 and are available to members.
In 2021, the Communications Committee gained several new members, including Melissa Bernardin, NHPHA advocacy & program coordinator, and Tara Graham, NHPHA immunization coalition coordinator. The committee was chaired by Jayme Simões, NHPHA board member and president and CEO of Louis Karno & Company Communications, and Jess Barnett, former NHPHA program assistant, and freelance senior copyeditor and artist. After serving as chair for three years, Lisa Vasquez, NHPHA board member and behavioral health strategist at the Nashua Department of Public Health and Community Services, stepped down at the beginning of 2021 due to conflicting responsibilities. NHPHA thanks Lisa for her longtime service to the committee and the board.

Due to the pandemic, the committee met entirely virtually throughout 2021. Its primary focus entailed revamping the NHPHA monthly e-newsletter template and contents in response to member feedback the committee obtained from a member survey conducted at the beginning of 2021. In addition to overhauling the newsletter template, on which NHPHA Program Assistant Autumn Raschick-Goodwin took the lead, the committee focused on providing content that was more meaningful and relevant to the newsletter audience—namely, local public health professionals. Lisabritt Solsky, NHPHA board member, NHPHA Membership Committee chair, and chief growth officer at Easter Seals, and Jayme wrote public health articles throughout the year. Tiffany Dodier, food access coalition coordinator; Lisa Vasquez; and Nicole Chute, health promotion & communication specialist at the Division of Public Health and Community Services, also contributed pieces. Former NHPHA Executive Director April Mottram and NHPHA President Gail Tudor divided the responsibility of penning “Inside NHPHA,” which provides updates about the organization. Jess conducted monthly interviews for the monthly board member/NHPHA member spotlight, which profiled Jenn Alford-Teaster, Gail, and longtime NHPHA members JJ Smith and Laura Davie, among others.

The committee plans to conduct another survey to seek members’ feedback on the monthly newsletter changes. In the meantime, if you have a suggestion on how the newsletter could improve or would like to propose an idea for content, please email Autumn at info@nhpha.org.

In addition to revamping the newsletter, committee members provided public health-related social media posts for NHPHA’s Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter accounts. The committee also helped promote the sale of NHPHA gear, an effort spearheaded by Lisabritt.

The NHPHA Communications Committee is always seeking new members; additionally, the committee urgently needs new chair/co-chairs. Jess stepped down as co-chair as of the end of March 2022, and Jayme’s position will also be vacant as he is leaving the NHPHA board in April. If you are interested in joining the committee or serving as co-chair, please email Autumn at info@nhpha.org.
In mid-2020, the NHPHA Policy Committee and Board initiated a policy strategic planning process that established policy priorities for the next two to three years. Those policy priorities are Prevention and Access; Public Health Infrastructure; Financial Security; and Food Security.

NHPHA’s advocacy initiatives aim to provide clear, consistent, timely messaging and a voice for those in need. With the support of an intern, NHPHA issued a weekly newsletter, “Health in All Policies,” during the 2021 legislative session. In this second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to advocate on critical public health issues thanks to the flexibility and responsiveness of the Policy Committee, staff, board, and membership working together to advocate virtually.

NHPHA Policy Committee, staff, and allied organizations partnered on several sign-on letters and Op-Eds in support of preserving and expanding public health infrastructure and funding to address the COVID-19 pandemic and other public health challenges.

The Food Insecurity Coalition kicked off the legislative session by reaching out to new legislators with a letter and infographic fact sheet highlighting the policy priorities of the coalition – including increasing participation in nutrition assistance programs, leveraging federal funding, and state funding for local food initiatives, and culturally appropriate outreach.

NHPHA helped during the biennial state budget process, collaborating with advocacy partners like New Futures on components of the 5 points agenda, including advocacy for community health workers and early childhood funding. NHPHA encouraged members to show up in the associated policy committees to advocate for the importance of these investments and was a critical voice in those settings.

NHPHA also sent a letter to Senators urging their attention to three priority areas: Funding of Community Health Workers, Primary Prevention for Families, and Striving for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Several critical funding areas were among our advocacy activities and opposition to harmful policies that were added to the budget.

NHPHA was instrumental in forwarding SB 104, which set out to fund a community health worker (CHW) in each regional public health network. There is a large body of research now relative to community health workers effectiveness in improving health outcomes, reducing healthcare costs, and bridging health disparities. The deployment of Community Health Workers was a recommendation from the Governor’s COVID-19 Equity Response Team report as an effort to lift some of our most vulnerable people during the pandemic and beyond. While the funding for CHWs did not move forward with the bill or in the state budget, the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services will receive federal funds to place CHWs throughout the state. CHWs can facilitate access to services, improve service delivery quality and cultural competence, and improve health outcomes by bridging gaps in health disparities. NHPHA also worked with partners advocating for SB 140 to increase funds for primary prevention for families, family resource centers, and family support services through community collaborations. The funding was removed from the bill but added to the budget. While some family support services were not funded, NHPHA is gratified that the services mentioned above will be available to New Hampshire families.

NHPHA also joined partners to support amended legislation to assure that the State Health Improvement Council can continue its work to plan and direct resources to improve the public’s health and decrease health disparities. Another success was the inclusion of funds in the budget initially requested through SB 98 to provide funds for the SNAP incentive program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Adding money to the budget allows recipients of the program to receive a dollar-for-dollar match on fruits and vegetables, emphasizing locally grown produce.