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## Press Release



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### Governor Hassan Signs Bill Allowing More Substance Misuse Counselors to Practice in New Hampshire

*Bipartisan Bill Will Play an Important Part in Comprehensive State Effort to Attract More Treatment Providers*

CONCORD – In order to attract more substance misuse counselors to New Hampshire and strengthen the State's treatment network, Governor Maggie Hassan today signed Senate Bill 424, which simplifies the licensing process for alcohol and drug abuse counselors moving to New Hampshire from other states.

"Increasing access to treatment services is critical to our comprehensive approach to combat the heroin and opioid crisis and help save lives," Governor Hassan said. "By simplifying the licensing process for alcohol and drug abuse counselors who are moving to New Hampshire, Senate Bill 424 will help ensure that there are more qualified counselors practicing in New Hampshire, which is essential to a robust treatment network that can support those battling addiction."

Senate Bill 424 will play an important role in a comprehensive state effort to attract and retain substance misuse treatment providers.

Governor Hassan also announced that the Department of Health and Human Services is working to increase payment rates for treatment counselors for its contracted providers to help retain and attract qualified staff in New Hampshire. This is part of a larger statewide effort to address the health care workforce shortage across New Hampshire and the country, which also affects the substance use disorders treatment workforce.

In addition, Governor Hassan and the Department of Health and Human Services will ask the Executive Council to approve next Wednesday a contract to increase efforts to recruit health care providers to New Hampshire. The contract with Bi State Primary Care Association provides an additional \$870,000 to recruit primary care, oral health, behavioral health and substance use disorder professionals. Governor Hassan also created earlier this year the Governor's Commission on Health Care Workforce to make recommendations for addressing New Hampshire's short- and long-term health care workforce needs.

"Combined, each of these efforts will help us keep and attract more counselors here in New Hampshire to provide critical services to those battling addiction," Governor Hassan said. "I am proud to sign this bipartisan bill into law in order to make it easier and more affordable for master licensed alcohol and drug counselors to practice in New Hampshire, and I will continue working with members from both parties and stakeholders at all levels to strengthen our substance use disorders workforce and increase access to treatment services."

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