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GRANITE STATE ADVOCACY ANNUAL REPORT

American Heart Association



THE **ADVOCACY PULSE** OF **NEW HAMPSHIRE**



Volunteers & Advocates engaging with Governor Kelly Ayotte in
proclaiming April 1, 2026 as National Walking Day in NH



NEW HAMPSHIRE CPR CHALLENGE

Earlier this year Executive Councilor John Stephen credited bystander CPR, provided by Mark and Abbie Battia, with his survival from cardiac arrest and issued a statewide CPR Challenge for Granite Staters to learn Hands Only CPR, along with leaders of NH EMS. As a result, nearly 2,300 participants learned the skills to save a life during EMS Week, May 17-23! Councilor Stephen continues to press for more people to learn CPR, including attending the NH Heart Walk on May 31st where he performed the survivor Drum Beat as his story was shared by event emcee Erin Fehlau. We look forward to working with Councilor Stephen next session to push for all students to learn CPR prior to graduating high school.





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ADVOCACY ACTIONS!



With the support of our dedicated advocates, we had another great year of policy wins. I am excited that we ended the American Heart Association's 2025-2026 fiscal year on June 30th with three legislative victories - and it's thanks to the help of our amazing volunteers taking action to engage with your lawmakers!

Passage of Acute Cardiac Events in School Sports

At the start of last summer, Governor Ayotte signed our cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) policy into law. The bill moved forward during the 2024/2025 legislative session without opposition. Schools have implemented guidelines-based action plans to ensure response teams are trained in CPR, equipped with AEDs and ready to save lives of student athletes or visitors to sports events in the event of cardiac arrest. This sets us up for our 2027 goal to require CERP campus-wide in schools.



DEFENSIVE CAMPAIGN POLICY VICTORIES

Defend Family Medical Leave Policy

As part of a maternal health policy campaign, we defeated a bill which threatened NH's Granite State Paid Family Medical Leave program. The bill would have weakened a newly enacted law which protected employees from losing their job when needing an urgent medical appointment as a pregnant or postpartum mom or for their newborn infant.

Protect Nonprofit Tax-Exempt Status

While the American Heart Association doesn't own property in NH, many of our partner organizations do. These non-profits provide vital services to our communities across the Granite State, saving municipalities from expending taxpayer dollars to keep residents healthy and safe. A bill seeking to permit towns to extend a property tax assessment on nonprofit facilities with assessed value over \$1 million was defeated. If passed, this would have limited the ability of nonprofits to continue their services and in some cases force organizations to close.



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS– SUPPORTIVE POLICY CHANGE

Closing the Gap for Students Eligible for Summer EBT

HB 1727 passed in early June fixing a state database barrier, allowing automatic enrollment of more students receiving free and reduced-price school meals into the SUN Bucks Summer EBT program. The federal program helps support low-income families' food budgets, providing \$120 per child so students have nutritious breakfasts and lunches during the summer months while school is out.

Stopping the Sale of Illegal Tobacco Products

SB 524 was amended by the House to create new regulations enforcing current tobacco retailer laws to prevent the sales of illegal tobacco products, many of which target youth, and are not FDA authorized. These products by-pass wholesalers which pay the state tobacco excise tax. The new law authorizes the Liquor Commission's enforcement division to identify and seize any untaxed, illegal products.

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HEALTH POLICY - ONGOING CAMPAIGNS



POLICIES WE CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE

Access to No-Cost School Meals

We continued our efforts to seek an interim path to free school meals, with a bill which sought to increase eligibility for no cost meals up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The fiscal note on the bill was still too high during a non-budget year, despite the state sharing the costs with local school districts who could choose to opt-in to the program. We will continue in 2027 to work on a different model that will increase access at a lower cost with all schools participating.

Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Services

After the elimination of state funding for the Department of Health and Human Services' Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program in the last state budget process, we worked with the remaining program staff to secure additional federal funding to ensure continuation of the NH Quitline services for Medicaid enrollees. We worked with our legislative champion to push for a \$1.00 per pack increase to the cigarette excise tax. The bill didn't pass, but we were afforded an opportunity to educate lawmakers on the need to restore state funding to continue efforts reducing current smoking rates and prevent youth initiation of tobacco products in 2027.



HEART POWERED VOLUNTEERS!

Advocates Make The Difference!

Our success on health policy change depends on the contributions of volunteer advocates, like you! Your legislators listen to constituents.

If you're still not yet an advocacy volunteer, we can use your help!

Please, Sign Up At: <https://heartpowered.org/>. Help us strengthen our voice by urging a friend or family member to sign up today!



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