

New Hampshire
MEDICAL SOCIETY

ADVOCATING FOR PHYSICIANS & PUBLIC HEALTH SINCE 1791

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2017 New Hampshire Physician Opinion Survey

Identifying the Leading Concerns of Granite State Physicians

The New Hampshire Medical Society (NHMS) has just completed its most recent survey of physician members regarding physician attitudes and practice satisfaction. Given the current health care debate in our nation and state, these findings regarding the leading issues of concern to New Hampshire physicians are enlightening and may contribute to the important discussions of our political leaders.

Among twenty-two possible choices, New Hampshire physicians overwhelmingly ranked **“improving access to mental health care”** as the most important issue requiring NHMS focus. Recent concerns about access of patients with mental illness to appropriate receiving psychiatric hospitals, including New Hampshire Hospital, and the backup of patients with mental illness in our hospital’s emergency departments has undoubtedly sensitized New Hampshire physicians to this current crisis. The NHMS continues to be actively working with state leaders to address this multi-faceted problem and identify opportunities for cooperation between public and private providers of care, as well as ensuring that adequate resources from both private and government sources are made available.

The second preferred area of concentration identified by NH physicians was to focus on a **“simplified payment system to meet basic healthcare needs of all citizens”**. This mirrors a similar preference, overwhelmingly supported by physicians in the NHMS 2007 survey, for a “simplified payer system in which public funds, collected through taxes, were used to pay directly for services to meet the basic healthcare needs of all citizens” and again suggests that a large majority of New Hampshire physicians would prefer a universal coverage system over the current insurance-driven marketplace. The NHMS is pleased to support a Single Payer Interest Group to study one such model of universal coverage.

The third preferred area of physician concern relates to **malpractice issues and tort reform**. While New Hampshire has been a leader in areas of liability reform with the adoption of pre-trial screening panels and marketplace reform, New Hampshire physicians still feel beleaguered by a system of jurisprudence that often interferes with the provision of safe, effective patient care and promotes expensive and harmful defensive practices. The NHMS has been a leader in efforts to offer sensible reform for many decades, and hopes to serve the patients and physicians of New Hampshire with support for ongoing reforms, both at the state and national levels.

While final data analysis of the 2017 survey is pending, NHMS leadership is hopeful that identification of these leading issues of concern to NH physicians will be helpful in focusing the current policy debate.

Founded in 1791, the [New Hampshire Medical Society](http://www.nhms.org) is dedicated and committed to advocating for patients, physicians, and the medical profession, as well as health-related rights, responsibilities and issues for the betterment of public health in the Granite State.

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