



Advocacy Matters Newsletter

Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire

August 20, 2020

General Court News- Legislative Activities Suspension

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Court is conducting legislative activities remotely with the exception of publicly noticed sessions in the House or Senate Calendar. During this time, the State House and Legislative Office Building remain closed to visitors.

Legislative Update - Teresa Rosenberger, Devine Strategies, President

As we continue to work through this summer of COVID, there are a few silver linings. One is the BIANH initiated legislation to require NH schools to have "return to learn" policies for students who are returning to school with any sort of brain injury. Our bill SB 584, passed the Senate unanimously and was on its way to the House for public hearings and action. We were ready with our supporters to testify and then COVID hit. It quickly became apparent that the House Education Committee was not going to meet and therefore our bill couldn't pass as it had to have a hearing and be acted on by the House before it could make it to the Governor. House committees were asked to list their top 5 bills that needed to pass in 2020 and they would be included in omnibus bills. It did not look like our bill, SB 584, was going to make it onto any of the omnibus bills that included House and Senate critical legislation.

In comes our own Steve Wade who called to the Chair of the House Education Committee and articulated the reasons why our "return to learn" legislation needed to be included in the House Education committee top 5 list. It worked. SB 584 was included in the omnibus education bill, HB 1558. It passed the Senate and the House and off it went to the Governor who signed it into law. Great news.

So what does it do? The Department of Education shall collaborate with the Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire to develop a concussion and traumatic brain injury return to learning policy and plan for school districts. The plan shall include a recommendation on school-based concussion and brain injury in-service training. The school board of each school district shall adopt a concussion and traumatic brain injury return to learning policy school education program. This is real progress for students with brain injuries. Congrats to all who worked so hard to make this program a reality.

[Acquired Brain Disorder \(ABD\) Waiver Listening Sessions Dates](#)

About the Acquired Brain Disorder (ABD) Waiver?

The Acquired Brain Disorder (ABD) Waiver provides Community Participation Services, Respite, Service Coordination, Supported Employment Services, Assistive Technology Support Services, Community Support Services (CSS), Crisis Response Services, Environmental and Vehicle Modification Services, Residential Habilitation/Personal Care Services, Specialty Services, and Wellness Coaching to New Hampshire's eligible participants with an acquired brain disorder. PDMS services are provided in accordance with He-M 525 and traditional services are provided in accordance with He-M 521, He-M 522, He-M 1001, and He-M 507. The rules can be found here: http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/state_agencies/he-m500.html

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services requests your input as the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS) begins the Acquired Brain Disorder (ABD) Waiver renewal process. Every five years, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that the states renew their Home and Community-Based Services 1915(c) waivers.

Due to COVID-19 all listening sessions will be held remotely using a call in option or video conferencing (Zoom).

There are several ways to give your input to BDS:

- Attend one of the four (4) listening sessions held on the dates noted below. At the listening sessions, you can provide verbal or comments.
- Email comments to DLTSSWaiverRenewal@dhhs.nh.gov
- Mail written comments to:
Ms. Jessica Kennedy
New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
Attn: ABD Waiver Renewal Input
105 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

DATE: Thursday, September 10, 2020

TIME: 1-3 pm Zoom link: <https://unh.zoom.us/j/91799395729> Call-In Option:

Dial: +1 646 876 9923,

Meeting ID: 917 9939 5729

DATE: Monday, September 14, 2020

TIME: 5-7 pm Zoom link: <https://unh.zoom.us/j/93785723202> Call-In Option:

Dial: +1 301 715 8592,

Meeting ID: 937 8572 3202

DATE: Tuesday, September 22, 2020

TIME: 9-11 am Zoom link: <https://unh.zoom.us/j/99182214903> Call-In

Option: Dial: +1 301 715 8592,

Meeting ID: 991 8221 4903

DATE: Thursday, September 24, 2020

**TIME: 2-4 pm Zoom link: <https://unh.zoom.us/j/91263455839> Call-In Option:
Dial: +1 646 876 9923,
Meeting ID: 912 6345 5839**

Attached find additional information on the Listening Series. If you are planning on providing testimony on the scheduled ZOOM Listening Series Dates, please contact Ellen Edgerly at Ellen@bianh.org

Gubernatorial Town Hall on Disability Issues

Join candidates seeking the office of Governor of NH for a Zoom-based Town Hall meeting where they will present their disability policy platforms and disability issues they intend to focus on if elected. Register today for a Gubernatorial Town Hall on Sept 2nd, 7:00pm — Get YOUR questions ready! Attached find additional information.

Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire Covid-19 Financial Assistance Program

Supporting Our People during the COVID - 19 Epidemic. The Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire is pleased to offer a financial assistance program specifically focused on individuals/families who are struggling with the effects of COVID – 19.

A one-time fund of \$500 per family will be made available to brain injury survivors and family members who are struggling in the aftermath of the pandemic. These funds could be used for things like purchasing food, paying rent, utilities or for other household needs for individuals who are laid off, furloughed, or otherwise out of work. However, there are no restrictions on what may be requested except that it must be related to situations people are dealing with as a result of the pandemic.

For eligibility requirements and to access the grant application, please visit www.bianh.org or email Ellen Edgerly at Ellen@bianh.org

If you have any questions relative to this newsletter, please contact me.

Take care-

Ellen

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