



William L. Wrenn  
Commissioner  
Department of Corrections

John A. Stephen  
Commissioner  
Department of Health & Human Services

Kelly A. Ayotte  
Attorney General  
Department of Justice

*APPENDIX B*

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
&  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

November 7, 2006

The Honorable Joseph E. Stone  
Chairman  
Commission to Study the Location of the Secure Psychiatric Unit  
Legislative Office Building  
Rooms 210-211  
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Representative Stone:

We are writing to express our support for the recommendations of the Commission to Study the Location of the Secure Psychiatric Unit. We believe the Commission has conducted an extremely thorough analysis of many complex factors involved in the provision of secure psychiatric care and is to be commended for the excellence of its work. Our agencies had a very cooperative relationship in this project, which we feel enabled us to focus on the basic concerns facing our departments and the State and to agree upon a plan for addressing these very important issues.

Both the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have been struggling to meet their responsibilities to provide appropriate treatment to persons with mental disorders who need secure care. Unfortunately, resource issues led to litigation and the DOC is now under a court order to establish a new residential treatment unit within the State Prison, which limits the ability of the SPU to meet its core mission. The obligation to provide higher levels of mental health treatment within the general prison population has limited DHHS access to the current SPU and has caused less than ideal arrangements for care of some patients within New Hampshire Hospital. This has occurred at a time of record levels of general admissions to NHH, making it more difficult and more expensive to provide treatment while controlling risks. Meanwhile, for some time DHHS has sought a less expensive setting for the care of offenders with mental retardation who are housed in a facility at the site of the former Laconia State School, a facility which the State has long promised to relocate. In addition, we are all aware that counties have been forced to deal with a rapid increase in the mental health needs of persons coming into the county correctional facilities, some of whom require more intensive treatment than the counties can provide and whose access to the SPU is limited by the same factors that pose a barrier to DHHS's use of that facility. Then there are the new responsibilities for the secure treatment of sexually violent predators who will be committed under HB 1692, which is effective January 1, 2007.

The State's ability to meet all its obligations to the various populations enumerated above and to do so in a fiscally responsible way while assuring the safety of the public is at the core of the Commission's recommendations and we urge their support by the General Court. There is an underlying objective of this process that we want to emphasize. The current configuration of services precludes access to any federal funds

The Honorable Joseph E. Stone

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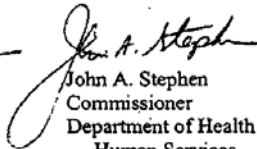
that might help pay for the treatment provided. By incorporating the SPU as part of NHH, we are reasonably assured that federal financial support can be obtained so improvements in care and treatment can be made in ways that minimize the financial impact upon the taxpayers. DHHS has a long history of finding appropriate ways to enhance federal revenues and we are optimistic that it can continue to do so in the area of secure psychiatric care.

We thank the Commission for its diligence and foresight and pledge our support of its plans and recommendations.

Sincerely,



William L. Wrenn  
Commissioner  
Department of Corrections



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