****

 **news release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** March 25, 2014

**CONTACT** AnnMarie French

603.856.8337 x2

**NH House Approves Bill to Extend Health Insurance to
More than 50,000 Granite Staters**

CONCORD, NH – In a show of bipartisan support, the House of Representatives today approved SB 413 by a vote of 202 to 132, enabling New Hampshire to accept federal funds to provide affordable health insurance to more than 50,000 low-income Granite Staters.

“Today is a great day for thousands of New Hampshire residents who will now, for the very first time, have access to affordable health care,” said Deb Fournier, policy analyst for the New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute.

“Members of the House and Senate should be commended for their steadfast dedication and commitment to reaching a solution that works for everyone,” said Fournier. “By enabling the state to accept these federal funds, Legislators have made a fiscally responsible decision that will save millions in state budget costs and pave the way for millions of federal dollars to enter the state economy and benefit communities across the state.”

SB 413 is a bipartisan compromise which utilizes federal Medicaid funds to support a program of privately-delivered health insurance for low-income individuals. The compromise is the result of months of discussion and debate regarding how best to design a program that solves a critical health policy issue for New Hampshire.

SB 413 creates a three-stage Health Protection Program to extend affordable health insurance to low-income Granite Staters: the Health Insurance Premium Program, the Bridge to Marketplace Premium Assistance Program, and the Marketplace Premium Assistance Program. Federal funding will cover 100 percent of the costs associated with the Health Protection Program, which will be repealed at the end of 2016 unless future legislatures vote to extend it.

For more information, see the NHFPI Health Protection Program fact sheet:

<http://www.nhfpi.org/research/overview-2014-health-protection-program.html>

-30-