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MASSACHUSETTS

More in state drop health insurance

Cancellations running at twice the pace of last year, amid cost concerns

By Sam Drysdale
State House News Service

BOSTON — More than 10,000 Massachusetts residents have dropped health plans obtained through the Massachusetts Health

Connector at a time when premiums tied to expiring federal subsidies are projected to soar.

As open enrollment nears a Dec. 23 deadline, Health Connector Executive Director Audrey Morse Gasteier said this week that the pace of dropped coverage is far ahead of last year, driven by premium spikes associated with the potential expiration of enhanced Affordable Care

Act tax credits.

The trend underscores the stakes for households caught between higher costs and tightening rules under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, she said.

“In the first month of open enrollment, we’ve seen over 10,000 people terminate their coverage for 2026. That’s double the amount of people who terminated by this time last open enrollment. So it’s

certainly a signal that people are looking at these price increases and are deeply concerned,” Gasteier said.

Gasteier said the Connector is also seeing people newly signing up for insurance but did not specify how many.

To ensure coverage starting in January, Connector members must select a plan and make a payment by Dec. 23. Open enrollment closes a month later for those locking

in coverage for February.

Enhanced federal ACA premium subsidies are set to expire on Jan. 1. While there’s interest among some members of Congress in extending them, a bipartisan deal to save the subsidies has not come together.

State officials say the expiring subsidies, new eligibility restrictions and cost increases in the One Big Beautiful Bill could reshape the

affordability and accessibility of marketplace coverage for many residents.

At a press conference, Gasteier repeated previously disclosed estimates “that hundreds of thousands of individuals across Massachusetts could lose health coverage through the Health Connector and Mass Health.”

Gov. Maura Healey

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Children’s time for classic rhymes



Jack Matarozzo, 19 months old, and his Nana Pam, roll a red ball back towards Children’s librarian Eileen Dugal.

Classic nursery rhymes like “Hey Diddle Diddle” and “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep,” come to life each week at “Mother Goose on the Loose Story Time” at the Derry Public Library and at other libraries throughout the region. The program engages young children using music, finger plays, props, and movement. For more information on free programs for children and teens visit www.derrypl.org



Evelyn Owen, 17 months, is held by her grandma Lori Driscoll as she gives the drum some taps during Mother Goose on the Loose Story Time.



Cathy Parrott helps Charlie, 3, get comfortable as he rolls back into her lap during Mother Goose on the Loose Story Time.



Children’s librarian Eileen Dugal raises the guest of honor in song during Mother Goose on the Loose Story Time.



Chie Dumont holds her grandson, Leo, as he keeps the beat with wooden blocks.



Children’s librarian Eileen Dugal, left, leads children and their caregivers in a song during Mother Goose on the Loose Story Time at the Derry Public Library.

Coming in Cold

Polar vortex a boon to ski season kick-off

by Paula Tracy
InDepthNH.org

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Blessed by natural snow state-wide and unusually cold temperatures the past few weeks, New Hampshire ski area operators said they are off to a great start for the 2025-26 season.

Spirits were high at the McIntyre Ski Area during a ski season kick-off party attended earlier in the week by both Republican

Gov. Kelly Ayotte and Democratic Congresswoman Maggie Goodlander, D-NH.

Both are “Nashua girls” as Goodlander noted, and former ski racers who love the sport. They pledged bipartisan support for the industry and perhaps even a friendly race in the new year.

They both said they hoped this would be a prosperous and fun year on the slopes of the Granite State, and noted the importance of skiing to the culture and



Gov. Kelly Ayotte visits the Cannon Mountain table and speaks with its general manager Jace Wirth at the Ski NH Winter kickoff party at the McIntyre Ski Area.

identity of the state. New Hampshire has more than 20 ski areas open already or about to open, many with

top to bottom skiing and mid-winter conditions thanks

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

As wells dry up, drinking water future is unclear

By Molly Rains
New Hampshire Bulletin

More than 200 wells went dry in New Hampshire during this year’s historic drought. With similarly sporadic precipitation trends predicted to continue, what that means for drinking water reliability in the state is still unclear — and the cost of coping is continuing to rise.

In response to widespread reports of dry wells and associated financial hardship, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services is set to restart a financial assistance program to aid qualifying low-income households who have lost access to drinking water due to drought conditions.

The Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund Advisory Commission voted in November to allocate just under \$2 million to this phase of the program, which has run twice before, both times within the last five years.

The funds will help some residents with steep costs associated with drilling new, more reliable wells. But as significant droughts become increasingly common, some experts said it would take more investment and more creativity to make New Hampshire’s drinking water supplies more resilient into the future.

Ensuring a reliable drinking water supply is a significant concern for the state, said Ted Diers, assistant water division director at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, in an interview. “It’s pretty hard to think of anything more fundamental,” he said.

Pressure on aquifers

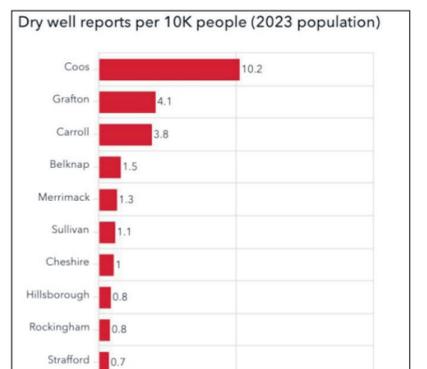
This season’s rash of dry wells accompanied the state’s driest summer on record. While New Hampshire’s annual precipitation totals are increasing with climate change, precipitation events are also becoming more unevenly distributed throughout the year. This means that long periods without any rain are becoming typical for summer and early fall, New Hampshire State Climatologist Mary Stampone said in October.

These cycles are predicted to continue, something groundwater experts said could affect drinking water supplies, too, though exactly how will vary across the state.

Snowmelt and rain feed the aquifers that, in turn, feed drinking water wells, said Mike Howley, senior geoscientist with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and program manager of the state’s Groundwater Measuring Network. But the dozens of monitoring wells that NHDES and the New Hampshire Geological Survey maintain across the state show how that happens is variable. In some places, fresh rainfall will recharge groundwater in a matter of hours; in others, it might take three to six months for water to work its way through the soil, Howley said.

Similarly, the effects of a drought might not

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NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
Data collected by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services in summer and fall 2025 show recent dry well reports per 10,000 residents, broken down by county.