

April 2019

## REP. KATE HOGAN'S SENIOR NEWS



### Legislative Preview: Tackling the cost of prescription drugs and opening doors to dental care

This winter was marked by snow flurries in MetroWest and a flurry of activity at the State House. I filed 27 bills and co-sponsored 173 additional legislative priorities as I stepped into my new role as First Division Chair. As a member of the House leadership team, I am proud to work with lawmakers from diverse backgrounds and be at the helm of important conversations for our state. My time as the Chair of the Committee on Public Health has prepared me for this new leadership role and the work ahead of us. Open the newspaper or turn on the morning news and it is clear that this is a pivotal moment for our state's public health – and the health and well-being of our seniors in particular.

As bills begin working their way through the legislative process, I want to highlight some of the bills I filed that aim to bring greater access, affordability, and transparency to health care. I want to start by sharing with you two of my pieces of legislation that address the rising cost of prescription drugs and the inability of thousands of state residents to access oral health care.

#### **An Act to promote transparency in prescription drug prices (H1162):**

Likely affecting your bottom line is the rising cost of prescription drugs – one of the most pressing public health issues facing the Commonwealth. For seniors on a fixed income, the expense of essential prescriptions can be a significant obstacle to care. The reality is that despite these escalating costs, the complex process of setting prescription drug prices has evaded impactful oversight and accountability. The legislation I filed acknowledges that a key step towards increasing transparency, and ultimately lowering the cost of pharmaceuticals, is to require state agencies to provide insight and analysis on which prescription drugs have the most burdensome price tag. Pharmaceutical companies would then be obligated to justify those price increases to legislators, state agencies, and health care policy groups.

#### **An Act to improve oral health for all Massachusetts residents (H1916):**

Age. Mobility. Geography. Income. These are just some of the many reasons thousands of Commonwealth residents are unable to access adequate dental care. I have refiled a bill this session that will increase access to oral health care for currently underserved populations by authorizing a mid-level provider called a dental therapist. These newly created dental therapists will be trained to perform essential dental care like filling cavities under the general supervision of a dentist, tapping into telehealth tools to share x-rays and consult on cases that are more complex. One of the most powerful impacts of authorizing dental therapists would be their ability to bring oral health care to our communities most in need and reach residents where they are – even in nontraditional settings like nursing homes.

I look forward to meeting with seniors in our towns this spring and taking the time to talk about any of my bills that my constituents would like to know more about. Stay tuned for more information on my legislative and budget priorities for seniors in the coming months. In the meantime, you can explore all of the bills I have filed this session on my legislator profile – simply search for “Kate Hogan” on the state legislature website: [malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov)

Please note my updated office information below.

#### **Rep. Hogan's Office Hours**

- **Hudson Office Hours** will be held on Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Hudson Public Library, 3 Washington Street, Hudson

If you are unable to attend office hours and have an issue or concern, please call the State House at (617) 722-2199 to schedule an appointment. In addition to Rep. Hogan's office hours, her staff is available in the District Office at Maynard Town Hall, 195 Main Street, on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (*Closed Holiday Mondays*)

*Kate Hogan*

April 2019

## REP. KATE HOGAN'S SENIOR NEWS

Proudly represents Bolton, Hudson, Maynard, and Stow

State House, Room 163, Boston, MA, 02133 / Phone: 617-722-2199/ [Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov](mailto:Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov)

District Office: Maynard Town Hall, 195 Main Street, Maynard, MA 01754/Phone: 978-897-1333