

*Monica Caserta Hutt*

*Chief Prevention Officer  
State of Vermont  
109 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05609*

**Monica Caserta Hutt  
Chief Prevention Officer  
S. 186- SHW Testimony  
2/15/24**

Good morning....for the record, I am Monica Caserta Hutt, Chief Prevention Officer for the state of Vermont.

My role is designed to focus on leveraging and supporting work across state government and in partnerships with our community to address upstream prevention efforts in multiple areas- suicide, chronic disease, disability, healthy aging, mental health issues, chronic absenteeism, poverty, homelessness – I work towards a focus on wellness and wellbeing and acknowledgement of the impacts of the Social Determinants of Health on physical, mental and emotional health.

And I do have a unique focus on substance use disorder and prevention- as a member of the Substance Misuse Prevention Oversight and Advisory Council, we have been very clear that recovery and recovery strategies are a critical part of our prevention work.

In considering S. 186, a strength of the bill is the idea that we move towards a cohesive system of care for the recovery work we do here in Vermont – that we look at a

- framework for those residences,
- identify the outcomes we are trying to achieve,
- try to replicate the successful components of a recovery residence,
- .....even as we acknowledge that the recovery journey is completely individual and must be supported with flexibility and compassion.

I want to share the work that a team of us, including Senator Lyons and the Division of Substance Use Programs in the Vermont Department of Health have been doing with the Fletcher Group, based on several meetings in June of last year that both Governor Scott and a joint legislative committee had with Governor Fletcher and his team from the Fletcher Group.

From that meeting, we began an informal consulting relationship with the Fletcher Group – meeting with them 3-4 times since then, based on their work with HRSA and Rural Centers of Excellence, including UVM, across the country and through a SMHSA grant that they have to provide technical assistance to states.

The Fletcher Group focuses on recovery residences and building recovery communities, braiding funding, measuring return on investment and outcome measures as they support people in recovery, and support states to build more extensive recovery residences to meet the need of individuals.

Our hope was to use time with that group to do some of the work that this bill imagines: partnering with organizations like VAMHAR and VTARR to:

---

- create a sustainable, successful network of recovery residences,
- identify clear connections to funding,
- identify and recommend critical components of care,
- focus on quality and successful outcomes,
- and prioritize the ability to meet the needs of residents along a continuum of care.

This would be on top of, and in addition to, the NARR (National Association of Recovery Residences) standards that VTARR uses now to certify recovery residences.

We were also really interested in the Jenna's Promise Model- essentially a recovery community- what the components of that model are and how it might be replicated and supported across the state.

To that end, we developed a draft CHARGE for our ongoing work with the Fletcher Group which, again, aligns with the intent of this bill and allows us to leverage some outside support to get some of this work done. The Charge Document was developed within our working group, with Senator Lyons and with input from VAMHAR. I will say that we haven't yet vetted it with VTARR but we intend to do that.....and the Fletcher Group is reviewing it now.

The **Draft** Charge document suggests the following.....

#### Draft Charge for Work between the State of Vermont/Division of Substance Use Programs and the Fletcher Group

- create a comprehensive inventory of all recovery residences in Vermont- both state funded and privately funded
- assess the current capacity, knowledge and ability of all recovery residences to collect data to inform outcomes
- assess Vermont recovery residences potential for future *capacity* in data collection
- assess the types of data systems currently in use in all recovery residences and define the minimum core components of a data system to address outcomes
- help Vermont to develop a framework of the critical components and measurable outcomes of a (1) recovery residence model and (2) a recovery community (i.e., Jenna's Promise-like) model and define how each of those fits into NARR standards
- help Vermont to assess our capacity to build and sustain alternative payment models for recovery residences
- provide technical assistance to DSU and recovery residences on how to build sustainable funding with a focus on developing fee structures
- Conduct a systems mapping exercise for Vermont which assesses the availability of component supports to successful recovery to include the availability of housing, economic supports, peer supports, workforce and employment opportunities, and identifies recommendations for improvement and investments

With all that said, we have done some thinking about how to better align S. 186 with the work we're proposing in this charge document.

And, unless you have questions for me; I'll turn it over to Dep Commissioner Dougherty to speak to those suggested bill language.

Thank you.