



Upper Valley Services (UVS) is a Designated Agency dedicated to supporting over 250 individuals with developmental disabilities in Orange County and also 7 surrounding counties. We also operate three statewide crisis beds through the Vermont Crisis Intervention Network (VCIN) and two other crisis beds, also shared statewide, through our Collaborative Crisis Services. Additionally, we support over 120 adults who are eligible for long-term nursing home level of care through our Adult Family Care program, known as Vermont Comforts of Home.

As we navigate through an unprecedented period of system change for developmental disability services in Vermont, it is crucial that we view our current services within the broader context of a provider system that is already stressed by significant staffing and housing shortages and system changes underway. These changes encompass substantial shifts such as the ongoing rate study, the implementation of alternative reimbursement rates, payment reform, a new standardized assessment process, conflict-free case management, and an interim quality service review process.

Mission:

Upper Valley Services provides inclusive and person centered supports for people to live their best lives.

Core Values: Honesty and Integrity, Unconditional Positive Regard, and Innovation.

Our Strengths:

- High quality & person-centered services
- Fully Redesignated August 2023
- ARIS Solutions is our business office/ admin rate at 5.39%
- Decreased vacancy rate- currently at 9% from 44% in 2022
- Improved turnover rate- currently at 30% down from 51% in 2021
- Increased wages & health and wellness benefits for staff
- Enhanced recruitment initiatives
- Long-time SLPs
 - 28 providers 6-10 years
 - 8 providers 11-15 years
 - 8 providers 16-20 years
 - 12 providers 21-25 years

- 6 providers 26-30 years
- 1 provider 38 years
- Thriving culture

SERVICE QUESTIONS:

2) Describe the typical persons served and services offered within each:

- a. UVS supports adults and children with developmental disabilities (intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder). Many of these individuals have complex mental health, medical, and or public safety including Act 248 needs. UVS currently supports- 202 adults and 60 children. 62% of adults supported receive 24 hour supports.
- b. Supports & Services- UVS provides a comprehensive array of services based on each person's needs. Each person must meet financial, clinical, and program eligibility criteria to access services.
 - Home and Community Based Services.
 - Service Coordination
 - Community supports
 - Employment supports(Work Unlimited Program)
 - Respite
 - In-home family supports
 - Home supports
 - Shared living support
 - Staffed living support
 - Supervised living support
 - Group living (licensed level 3 home)
 - Clinical supports
 - Other supportive services including
 - Communication supports
 - Behavioral consultation
 - Transportation
- c. Children, Youth, and Families
 - Bridge Care Coordination
 - Flexible Family Funding
 - Family Managed Respite
 - Children's Personal Care Assessments
- d. Emergency and Crisis Supports
 - Expanded Vermont Crisis Intervention Network (VCIN) capacity to 3 beds offered statewide to support individuals in crisis.
 - VCIN has served 8 individuals since July 1, 2023. Fully utilized.
 - Established Collaborative Crisis Services with 2 beds shared statewide to support individuals in crisis.

- Collaborative Crisis has served 19 individuals since July 1, 2023. Both Fully utilized. 9 of these individuals (47%) receive services from other agencies.
 - After hours support line and in-person crisis response.
- e. Advocacy and Peer Services
 - Self Advocacy group meets weekly
 - 3 Peer-Mentors
 - 3 Peer Growth Lifelong Learning campuses
- f. Adult Family Care-
 - Vermont Comforts of Home program serves adults needing nursing home level care.
 - Currently have 122 participants in 8 counties throughout Vermont.
- g. Performance Measures-
 - 2023 Individual satisfaction survey
 - I received the services that were right for me- 100% responded Agree/Strongly Agree
 - Staff treat me with respect- 100% responded Agree/Strongly Agree
 - The services I received made a difference- 93.75% responded Agree/Strongly Agree, 6.25% responded Neutral
 - My quality of life improved as a result of the services I received- 93.75% responded Agree/Strongly Agree, 6.25% responded Neutral
 - I love where I live- 100% responded Agree/Strongly Agree
 - Shared Living Provider survey
 - The top 3 reasons for becoming a shared living provider are
 - Ability to work at home
 - Lifestyle choice
 - Relationship with the person
 - The top 3 challenges of being a shared living provider are
 - Emotional and physical demands
 - Finding respite staff
 - Financial constraints
 - The supports most valued by shared living providers are
 - Regular communication and updates
 - Emotional and moral support
 - Training and development opportunities
 - 22% of respondents indicated they would be leaving the role within the next 5 years.
 - DAIL Value based payments/outcome measures
 - Service coordinator in-person home visits
 - Encounter data
 - SIS A referrals and assessments
 - Critical incident report timely filing

- Employment rate (# of individuals served who are employed)

3) Practice Improvement:

a. Initiatives & Innovations

- Expanded VCIN Services
- Established Collaborative Crisis Services
- Act 186 Housing Grant Initiative- development of two housing projects to expand individualized housing options to accommodate 6-8 individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Peer Growth & Lifelong Learning Program
- UVS Learning Community (an online platform for resources, communication, and training to shared living providers, families, individuals, and agency staff.)
- Expanding Self-Advocacy opportunities.
- 3 Peer Mentors
- Developed and implemented Environmental Risk Assessment for individuals receiving 24 hour supports.
- Expanded training program.
- Expanded HR, IT, and Facilities capacity.

b. Quality/Practice Improvements

- Professional Development
 - Training standards
 - Supervision standards
 - UVS Learning Community
- Resource Development
 - Quality
 - IT
 - HR
 - Housing
 - Facilities
- Crisis Services
 - After hours crisis support line
 - In-person after hours crisis support
- Enhanced Monitoring and Data Collection
 - Encounter data
 - Service utilization monitoring
 - Database tracking of regulatory standards
 - Clinical Review Committee assures oversight of individual rights and safety standards.

4) Sustainability:

a. Needs & Challenges

- Multiple, concurrent DDS system changes
 - COI
 - SIS A

- Payment reform
- Funding to continue to expand and maintain integral supports and services to individuals with disabilities and Vermonters eligible for long term care services.
- Staffing
 - Funding to remain competitive and attractive
 - DSP turnover rate of 67.7% 2023
 - Aging workforce
 - Recruitment and retention
- Housing
 - Lack of housing for potential staff to move into the state
 - Lack of affordable and accessible housing for individuals with disabilities
- Resources
 - Lack of clinical/psychiatric providers
 - Increased acuity levels
 - VCIN bottleneck
- Aging Caregivers
 - 22% of UVS SLP survey respondents indicated they will leave the role within 5 years.
 - Aging parents and siblings

5) Operational:

- a. 5.39% of operational costs are administrative
- b. Staff vacancy rate is currently 9%. Direct Support Professional role has the highest turnover rate.
- c. Strong recruitment strategies have been employee referrals, posting on Indeed and GlassDoor, WCAX ad on tv streaming services and Facebook.
- d. Retention initiatives include enhanced benefits, health and wellness programs, enhanced support and supervision, and professional development opportunities.
- e. EHR is Carelogic. UVS also utilizes SAMS for the VCOH participants.
- f. Medicaid is our primary payer.

Closing Summary:

It is important to recognize that the absence of affordable and accessible housing, as well as the extreme staffing shortages make it nearly impossible for agencies to effectively respond to and create solutions around destabilizing changes in a person's life. Examples of this may include a loss of a home provider and therefore built in support system, an aging parent who can no longer provide the care that one might need, losing an apartment due to the owner turning it into a lucrative vacation rental, a loss in one's family or friend network, a loss of a job, and the list can go on and on. Additionally, statewide and at UVS, we are experiencing a higher level of acuity for many people supported through our agencies. At Upper Valley Services alone, over 60% of those with developmental disabilities that we serve have co-occurring diagnoses, many of whom need wrap around supports in carefully designed and therapeutic support arrangements. It is critical that the support that people rely on for stability in their lives remain secure. Any

significant upheaval could easily result in homelessness and loss of support. At UVS, we are doing all we can to contribute to a remodeled system of care that is designed effectively in order to respond to the changing needs and dynamics of those who receive HCBS services.

Thank you for your attention, your leadership, and your unwavering commitment to improving the lives of all Vermonters.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gloria M. Quinn".

Gloria M. Quinn
Executive Director