



To : Chair Wood and Members of the House Human Services Committee
From: Stephanie Winters, Vermont Medical Society & Vermont
Psychiatric Association, swinters@vtmd.org
Date: May 2, 2024
RE: S. 114 –Establishment of Psychedelic Therapy Advisory Working Group

I am submitting these comments on behalf of the Vermont Medical Society, Vermont’s largest organization representing physicians and physician assistants and Vermont Psychiatric Association, Vermont’s membership organization for psychiatrists.

S.114 as passed the Senate addressed a number of our concerns with the bill as introduced. While there is promising research in development regarding psychedelics for therapeutic use, especially those using it in controlled and monitored circumstances, the research is ongoing, and we have a lot to learn. As Dr. Charles MacLean testified yesterday, while there is promise, we need to follow the therapeutic evidence and science as it is evolving rapidly.

One issue we continue to have is charging the work group with laying out timelines for achieving “universal and equitable access to psychedelic assisted treatments.” We are concerned that this may be beyond the reasonable scope of the workgroup and would require a complex examination of issues such as sourcing, affordability, insurance coverage, availability of mental health clinicians generally, and more. We believe it would be a more feasible charge to ask the Work Group to: “(4) provide potential timelines for providing ~~universal and equitable~~ access to psychedelic assisted treatments as recommended by subsection (c)(2).”

As background, we also made the following comments in the Senate regarding S. 114 as introduced, which were incorporated into the Senate-passed version of the bill:

- First, we did not think that criminal penalties for the possession, dispensing or selling of psilocybin should be removed before further study and input by the findings of the Advisory Working Group;
- Second, we commented that the members of the working group should be expanded to make sure that it is comprehensive and balanced, including representation from the Department of Health, Board of Medical Practice and Vermont Psychiatric Association.

Thank you for considering our feedback on S. 114. I would be happy to provide further information as useful to your work.