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MEMORANDUM

To: Representative Martha Heath, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations

From: Representative Ann Pugh, Chair, House Committee on Human Services

Date: March 13, 2014

Subject: Follow up to HHS FY 15 budget memo

The Human Services Committee (HHS) received several questions and comments from the House Appropriations Committee (HAC) regarding our budget memo dated February 28, 2014. We have addressed each of these questions or comments below.

Question #1: It is HAC's understanding that there is no money in the governor's proposed budget to continue Youth in Transition. How important does HHS feel this is? Can HHS identify any sources of funding within AHS that could be repurposed to support this work?

Response #1: HHS was told that there was money in the Integrated Family Services budget that would represent one-half of the funding. We suggest that you double-check with Melissa Bailey. We supported what we understood to be the Governor's recommendation because of the strong outcome data from this program. We did not make a recommendation to fully fund to the amount of the now-finished federal grant.

Question #2: I thought a member of HAC explained to at least some members of HHS that the money for treatment in the proposed budget cannot be used to increase the provider network. Is that not the case? It is a bit complicated given the strategy the administration used to come up the money.

Response #2: Yes, we learned at the end of our discussions that the Governor's plan is to shuffle treatment funds. We believe that this reshuffle should include private providers. The overall goal is to increase access to treatment. We passed the bill on a 10-0 vote.

Question #3: I wasn't certain what the memo meant by using tobacco money only for public health programs. I believe that is the case now ... all spending of tobacco dollars is for health-related programs.

Response #3: Sorry we weren't clear enough. If the State receives tobacco settlement funds, we believe they should be directed to the Tobacco Trust Fund and used for tobacco-related public health issues. Public health (i.e. population-based activities such as tobacco prevention) is different from providing health care services to individuals.

Question #4: I was confused by the statement in the DMH section about seven beds in Chittenden County on hold ... the beds in Westford are open???

Response #4: We were unintentionally narrow. We meant to reference the plan in Act 79 for 15 beds in northwestern Vermont (Chittenden and Franklin Counties). Eight of those beds did go forward in Westford, while the other seven are on indefinite hold.