

I am Kathy Holsopple from Fletcher, Vermont. I am a parent of a young man who has developmental and mental health challenges, and I am Executive Director of the Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. I have come to speak on behalf of the Youth in Transition (YIT) grant, the successes of this 6 year grant, and funding needed to continue this work.

Youth in transition to adult life is often seen as a difficult population, but through the 6-year Youth in Transition grant we have seen the life direction of many youth/young adults change dramatically for the better.

This youth work has **significantly reduced**:

- Young adult involvement with criminal behavior and Dept of corrections
- Use of prescription opiates and other illegal drugs
- Depression and the need for treatment for other mental health conditions

And **significantly increased**: Educational involvement

Since 2010 well-trained workers have provided individualized services using the TIP-Transition to Independence- framework.

Some key factors of this work:

- Respecting, listening to, and empowering young adults to achieve good outcomes- in 2 words- Trusting relations
- 1 Young Adult said these services and the workers who provide them give young adults "hope for the future."
- The services teach life skills and connect young adults to needed services. They also provide peer outreach, which draws young people in, empowers them to be an advisory voice to the System of Care and to their communities, and gives them opportunity to give back to their communities.
- Social marketing has been a key component, which allows us to reach young people in the ways they prefer to communicate
- Cultural and linguistic competency is critical to addressing and eliminating health disparities and draw in young adults from many cultures
- State and regional partnerships developed during this grant period between human services, young adults and families are critical to success and are the basis for the design and delivery of services.

The Governor's Mental Health Budget includes half of the funding needed to continue this good work and excellent outcomes. A conservative estimate of the 1 year cost savings is \$976,000, which exceeds the amount we are asking for to FULLY fund this program for fiscal year 2015. Another concern with only half funding is that we will lose key people, and we know keeping good workers, who create those trusting relationships, are the strength of this program.