

VERMONT LEGAL AID, INC.

OFFICE OF HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

264 NORTH WINOOSKI AVE. - P.O. Box 1367
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05402
(800) 917-7787 (VOICE AND TTY)
FAX (802) 863-7152
(802) 863-2316

OFFICES:

BURLINGTON
RUTLAND
ST. JOHNSBURY

OFFICES:

MONTPELIER
SPRINGFIELD

OFFICE OF HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE BUDGET

March 13, 2014

Trinka Kerr, Chief Health Care Advocate

- Last year about this time we said we needed about \$1.5 million in funding to staff up for the exchange and our increased duties related to the Green Mountain Care Board.
- Legislators and agencies stepped up and came up with what we needed. We are hoping the same will happen this year.
- We responded to two RFPs for which Vermont Legal Aid was awarded funding: one last spring to DFR and DVHA, and one last fall to the Agency of Administration. We did not hear that there was any problem with our projected budgets.
- We relied on the funding levels approved last year and in our RFP proposals when we increased our individual consumer assistance hotline staff from five to seven advocates to handle the expected increase in call volume, and to add a policy analyst and actuarial services to handle GMCB work. The GMCB told us we needed a policy analyst, and they were right. We also had to increase our physical space in order to accommodate the new staff.
- The call volume has increased more than 35% over last year, all of which is attributable to Vermont Health Connect issues. We had predicted a 25% increase.
- GMCB work has also increased due to the state's receipt of the State Innovation Model (SIM) grant. We are now covering seven VHCIP (SIM) work groups, plus the Core Team meetings, plus I am on the VHCIP Steering Committee. This is in addition to the rate review; hospital budget and certificate of need work we are doing.
- Roughly one third of our work involves GMCB and policy and public protection work, and two thirds involves individual consumer advocacy. We have 12.7 staff members.
 - Three staff members (two staff attorneys, one policy analyst) are engaged full time in GMCB and policy work.
 - Eight staff work full time assisting individual consumers (one supervising attorney, seven paralegals).
 - The Chief Advocate, half-time Outreach Specialist, and 20% time Staff Attorney who specializes in tax law contribute to both types of work.
- Our budget for SFY 2014 which now includes some actuals, is projected to be about \$1.4 million.

The Office of Health Care Advocate, previously named the Office of Health Care Ombudsman, is a special project of Vermont Legal Aid.

- So far, our staffing pattern appears about right, although we are struggling some with the increased call volume to the hotline. We are hoping that volume drops some in the next few months.
- We should be given more time to determine if we able to handle the work with this staffing pattern.
- If we do not get full funding, we will have to reduce staff and the amount of services we are able to provide.

	SFY 2014 (Projected)	SFY 2015 (Projected)	SFY 2016 (Projected)
AoA Income Projection			
DFR Core Grant	\$215,000	\$215,000	\$215,000
Rate Review Grant	\$182,500	\$37,613	\$0
GMCB Health Policy Analyst	\$100,000	\$0	\$0
GMCB Actuary	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Act 79 Billback	\$150,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
DVHA Core Grant	\$306,886	\$307,246	\$307,246
Vermont Health Connect Grant	\$300,000	\$0	\$0
Vermont Health Connect Sustainability		\$150,000	\$300,000
Federal Consumer Assistance	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
Federal Web/Outreach Grant	\$30,000	\$0	\$0
Projected Balance Carryover (amended as of 2/18/2014)	\$0	\$101,870	\$0
Total AoA Income Projection	\$1,424,386	\$1,211,729	\$1,222,246
Current HCA Budget (Actual and Projected)	\$1,322,516	\$1,404,782	\$1,436,573
Estimated Shortfall (Current)	\$101,870	(\$193,053)	(\$214,327)