

March 10th, 2014

Dear Senator Ayer:

Thank you for soliciting our input about the proposed study committee focusing on staff secure residential care, as proposed in S.267. I respectfully recommend that this study not move forward. Since Woodside was re-purposed in 2011, the department has spent quite a lot of time focusing on enhancing treatment services and quality of services at Woodside.

In January 2012 the Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance initiative was implemented. A full time position was added to:

- Raise program standards to match those required by accrediting organizations
- Monitor compliance with all regulatory authorities
- Create internal tracking mechanisms measure outcomes:
- Successful low level interventions for high level behaviors
- Success meeting treatment benchmarks
- Increase in service delivery
- Improved quality of services
- Increased support of staff through supervision
- Practice, Policy and Procedure alignment

Since that time, Woodside has focused on a number of program areas:

- Treatment begins at intake
- Treatment is monitored throughout the residents' stays
- Individual and group counseling services
- Improved educational services
- Transitional/reintegration services
- Family engagement
- Psychiatric and full medical services
- Systematic approach to implementation of program components
- Procedural development including stakeholder participation

There have been significant positive outcomes as a result:

- Three year accreditation from the Center for the Accreditation of Residential Facilities (CARF International)
- Recognition from Performance Based Standards for Outstanding Performance and Continued Outstanding Performance
- An increase in successful low level interventions and a reduction in physical interventions and seclusion
- A significant increase in therapeutic services





Woodside implemented Performance Based Standards, a nationally benchmarked system of outcome measures for secure residential facilities close to a decade ago. This has been successful in informing Woodside's improvement efforts that we are currently piloting a parallel set of standards for residential care in three other residential programs in the state. These standards are called Community Based Standards. Planning for this pilot began in September of 2013.

In addition, Woodside and all of Vermont Residential Treatment Programs are licensed by DCF's Residential Licensing and Special Investigations Unit. The Residential Treatment Program licensing standards were updated in 2012 to reflect current thinking about quality residential programming.

Lastly, the Agency of Human Services submitted a report titled ***Residential and Non-residential Services for Pre-natal to 22 Years Old*** to the House and Senate Committee on Appropriations, House Committee on Human Services and Senate Committee on Health and Welfare on January 15, 2012.

I therefore respectfully recommend that the study committee not be established. As you are aware, these studies are time-consuming. In this case, I do not think that value will be added.

Sincerely,

Dave Yacovone, Commissioner
Department for Children and Families
Agency of Human Services

