

Testimony to Vermont

Senate Health and Welfare Committee

April 4, 9:00 A.M.

Gary De Carolis, Executive Director
Turning Point Center of Chittenden County

We are starting to get it right:

- Bringing The Recovery Centers into the system of supports for those in recovery from alcohol and illegal substances was a huge big step forward.
- We provide pre and post supports for those early in recovery before they go to a treatment center and upon return. We also are there for people who are not going to treatment services but want t safe place to be away from the streets.
- We offer those new in recovery a rich path of activities to help them grow their recovery from abstinence only to the ability to live a full life. From 12 step meetings to numerous alternative meetings and workshops from exercise, yoga, meditation, acupuncture, art classes etc.
- Our recovery coaching program, albeit severely underfunded administratively and programmatically, provides those who want someone to walk with them in a deep one on one relationship that opportunity.

Areas needing to be bolstered are:

- More funding for recovery centers so each Center has the ability to properly staff their Center, training the many volunteers that work there, develop the necessary programs, make the outreach links with other service providers including the hub and spoke system.

- The one position that I strongly believe would take us from good to great is having a full time **peer recovery support worker** (currently no recovery center has the funds for this position). Someone in recovery who would sit in the audience with guests and engage with them to see what it is that would help them get to the next step in their recovery. As it is now our guests can come to our recovery support hours and can sit there for hours on end and not engage with other people. When we have had interns who have done the role of recovery support work miracles happen in large part because someone to the time and energy to engage with the person, acted as a resource guide, a listener, a referral source etc.
- Have the detox beds available when someone is ready to begin their journey into recovery. Currently there is limited access to detox beds and medically assisted detox leaving someone with no alternative but to continue to buy drugs from the street and continue their addiction.
- End the waiting list for people to get on medically assisted recovery (methadone and suboxone). It is painful to watch people having to buy illegal drugs to keep their addiction going. We supported a young woman who so wanted to get into treatment (suboxone) and had to wait months to get off the waiting list. She was referred from the Drug Courts for a Recovery Coach. Did not make many appointments in part because she had to keep using since she was on the waiting list. She couldn't even be in our Center because she was not in recovery although she desperately wanted to be.