

S. 139 Conference Committee

Mental Health Registry

Kathy Hentcy

Director, Mental Health and Health Care Integration

The Department of Mental Health has concerns about the proposal to create Vermont mental health registry. Our concerns include;

- Difficulty of creating and maintaining a current and accurate listing of clinicians
 - There is a wide variety of licensure today which adds complexity to which clinicians have training to address specific conditions
 - As clinicians leave the state or retire, the list would have to be updated
 - Creating a listing that includes specialties and training of each clinician would be time-consuming and also require updating
 - Clinicians are not always accepting new clients; creating a website that reflects who is or isn't would be difficult.

These issues can all be addressed and resolved, of course, but that would require some expense in time and development. The Department of Mental Health agrees with the findings of the HealthFirst report on this issue.

*“Bailit recommends that Healthfirst not upgrade PTOPHelp or develop a new Vermont-specific website directory of MH/SA treatment providers. Rather, it is our assessment that Healthfirst would be using its resources more effectively by promoting the increased use of the *Psychology Today* Therapist Finder website by both MH/SA treatment providers and primary care offices, and by creating opportunities for PCPs and therapists to get to know one another. Finally, Healthfirst could provide an important service by creating a coalition to develop and post a list of psychiatrists who are able to do psychiatric evaluations.”*

DMH would like to note that the important work the Blueprint for Health and the ACOs are doing to establish Unified Community Health Teams will facilitate the work of connecting primary care providers to their local/regional mental health and substance abuse services providers.