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Representative Ann Pugh  
Vermont State House  
Room 46  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Representative Pugh,

Thank you for giving Pathways Vermont the opportunity to testify before the House Committee on Human Services last Thursday, January 29th.

Attached to this letter you will find the information you requested to supplement our testimony.

Sincerely,

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1. What is the total overall budget of Pathways? What is the funding from State vs. federal monies? Who/what departments/agencies within State government support services as differentiated from housing subsidies?

**A. Pathways State FY 15 Overall Budget and Services Funding Sources**

Program	Funding Source	Federal/State	Total Funding
Housing First	SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, grant concluded 9/30/14)	Federal	\$200,000
	Department of Mental Health (includes \$611,920 from Governor's FY 15 Budget Adjustment Request)	State	\$1,216,375
	Department of Corrections Transitional Housing Grant	State	\$500,936*
Wellness Co-op	SAMHSA Mental Health Transformation Grant (sub-granted through DMH)	Federal	\$282,000
Soteria House (Act 79 mandated)	Department of Mental Health (includes renovations, start-up & operating funds)	State	\$758,459
Vermont Support Line (Act 79 mandated)	Department of Mental Health	State	\$200,000
Supportive Services for Veteran Families	Veterans Administration (subgranted through UVM)	Federal	\$540,000
All Programs	Foundations and Donations Support	Local	\$97,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$3,293,834</b>

*\*Direct grant to Pathways includes an additional \$330,000 in housing subsidy funds (reflected below)*

**B. Funding Sources for Existing Housing Subsidies**

Housing Subsidy Type	Housing Funds Managed by	Funding Source	# of apartments	Total Funding
Department of Corrections Transitional Housing Subsidy	Pathways	State	58	\$330,000
DMH Housing Subsidy and Care	Vermont State Housing Authority	State	74	\$624,000*
Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)	Vermont State Housing Authority or Burlington Housing Authority	Federal	16	\$124,800*
Shelter Plus Care Subsidy	Vermont State Housing Authority or Burlington Housing Authority	Federal	47	\$366,600*
Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher	Vermont State Housing Authority	Federal	2	\$540,000*
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$1,985,000</b>

*\*based on approximate cost of \$650/person/month/unit*

***Please note:*** the above table does not include 14 federal Shelter Plus Care Subsidies currently designated through a HUD grant for use by Pathways in Rutland County to serve chronically homeless Vermonters with severe and persistent mental illness. Pathways would need an additional \$350,000 annually to provide the required service match for these subsidies (\$175,000 in FY 15).

**2. How many new individuals did Pathways serve in 2014?**

59 individuals

**3. How many people entered the program from acute care psychiatric institutions in 2014?**

6 Individuals

**4. Can you show us some faces and stories of people you work with in the Housing First program?**



**Deb**

Deb is 58 years old and is interested in becoming a Social Worker and/or potentially working for the Pathways Vermont Support Line. Deb started working with Pathways in February 2010 and has been living in her own place for the last four years.

Deb was forced to leave her apartment in 2008 and had a period of involuntary hospitalization at Vermont State Hospital followed by an extended stay at Second Spring, a residential treatment facility. Deb left Second Spring, but was unable to acquire housing and found herself homeless for months.

Deb met with Pathways staff at their office in Burlington and made it clear that she was not interested in “mental health services,” but wanted an apartment and a home where she could have stability and pursue her goals. Despite specific housing needs and a lack of landlord references Pathways found an apartment for Deb within a month of connecting with her. Deb has lived in her apartment for more than three years and has not returned to any hospitals for psychiatric care. Deb stays busy attending classes at CCV, participating in a VCAM show with other Housing First participants, and has become an adept internet user; she presented information on Housing First and her own experience with Pathways to an international audience via online video conferencing.

**Allen**

“If you were to meet me three years ago, you wouldn’t even recognize me. I’d probably scare you.” Allen has been on his own since he was 13. He’s been homeless more than four times in his life. Before he started working with Pathways, 27-year old Allen was stuck in a vicious cycle of homelessness, alcoholism and crisis. For over a year he was bouncing in and out of shelters, to detox to rehab, to jail and eventually back on the streets before beginning the entire cycle again: “They [the shelter] told me I needed to complete rehab before I could stay, that put



me right back on the streets until I got into rehab - it took me 3 months.” It was when he went through another relapse and ended up back on the streets that he got connected with the Housing First program.

Allen’s issues with drinking and mental health did not end just because he was housed, it took a while - “At first I took everything for granted, I was still drinking and losing control... I dug myself into such a deep hole. It gets overwhelming...you don’t know where to start picking things up.” Pathways supported Allen in addressing the needs he considered to be most pressing: getting sober and stopping the cycle of crisis. Allen has been sober since May 2013 and is starting to feel like his mental health is more stable. With this foundation, Allen is looking to the future, to finally addressing long-term health and chronic pain issues. After which he wants to make a plan to go back to work. “I’m actually kind of feeling emotions for the first time and they’re not all drowned with drugs and alcohol. I’m navigating that. I’m finally living life to live life.” For Allen, permanent supportive housing was the first step to reclaiming his life.



**Melissa:**

“You don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone. It was a terrible time for me.” At 63 years old, after a long struggle with mental health crisis and alcoholism, Melissa was facing homelessness for the first time in her life. Melissa felt frightened and hopeless; she wasn’t prepared to be homeless. The residential recovery program she was staying at was preparing to discharge her without a place to go. Melissa had returned to Middlebury after a four month stay at the Brattleboro retreat addressing her struggles

with alcohol and depression. Despite the months of investment in treatment, the prospect of being homeless was bringing her back to a dark, familiar place. Her disability payments were not enough to pay for an apartment and she could not go back to living with her sister. She felt trapped.

Melissa was referred to Pathways’ Housing First program by her counselor at the Counseling Service of Addison County. The Housing First program intervened by supporting Melissa to locate permanent housing in her community and connecting her with local resources to make that solution sustainable, however long that might take. For Melissa, the Housing First program created a light at the end of the tunnel: “It gave me hope. It pulled me out of the funk that I was in.”

Despite the fact that it was a competitive rental season, Pathways’ housing team found Melissa an apartment in Shoreham just in time. It was more than she imagined was possible. In her own words, she had the luxury of being a little “fussy” in choosing a place to live. By renting units from local landlords, Pathways is able to be flexible and make sure that each and every client feels at home in their unit. Once housed, Pathways staff worked with Melissa to make sure that her housing was sustainable, by connecting her to a rental voucher and assistance with utilities to ensure that all of her basic needs are met, “I wouldn’t be able to swing it without Pathways. I wouldn’t be able to do it.”

Ultimately, Melissa’s goal is to be well. With a secure roof over her head she has been able to continue working with her counselor to address her mental health issues and feels like she is making progress. In fact, she feels ready to start working on her next goal - getting back to work. She plans to meet with Pathways’ employment specialist to begin pursuing work in her field, home care for the elderly. “I’ve been insecure about getting my feet wet again, but it’s something that has to be done. I’m going to see what I can do, test my skills.” She doesn’t think any of this would be happening if Pathways had not stepped in. “It’s been an enormous help. It brings me back my dignity. Having a home, it changes my whole attitude towards life.”

### **John**

John is a 70-year-old man who lives independently in his apartment in Chittenden County. John enjoys music, often calling into his favorite radio station to speak live on the air and make requests for his favorite rock-n-roll classics. Last year he purchased a keyboard with money he saved and has been writing his own music. John moved into his apartment in October of 2012 and takes pride in keeping a clean and clutter free space.

Prior to working with Pathways, John had been homeless since 1998. He camped out during the summers and stayed in shelters or motels during the winter months. He had several inpatient hospital stays related to mental health concerns and also had a long history of alcohol use. John’s criminal history, including several arson charges and a manslaughter charge from his youth, made finding housing difficult. John stated that when he was younger he did not much mind being homeless, but as he aged he felt the need to “settle down,” and to find a place to call home.

Since settling into his home John has been able to focus on his finances, learning to write checks and even set up automatic deductions from his account. He enjoys frequent visits from the team and hosted Housing First Program visitors from Alaska.

