

**From:** Mark Ames [vtrecoverynetwork@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 10, 2015 5:31 AM

**To:** Theresa Utton; Robert Starr; Diane Snelling; Mitzi Johnson; Peter Fagan; Diane Lanpher

**Subject:** Testimony for the Appropriations Committees

**Attachments:** VRN FY15 Annual Report.pdf; Budgetary Priorities FY 15.doc

The Governor's budget address specifically referenced funding for treatment and a recovery center. The Governor's Opiate summit last year was followed by regional forums. The forum in the Newport region suggested that the creation of a recovery center was a top priority.

The Governor's leadership in responding to addiction as a chronic, relapse prone disease and a public health problem has moved the conversation past just providing more access to treatment and embraced the concept of providing ongoing recovery support. The governor's commitment to healthcare reform and parity includes providing those with addictive diseases with the ongoing supports provided for people with other chronic diseases.

Vermont is building a recovery system. Recovery centers are providing people with an easily accessible front door to Vermont's treatment system and a destination during/after treatment where people can move from cultural groups that support addictions into recovering communities that support them in a new lifestyle. Recovery is the shared goal of treatment providers and recovery centers. Treatment is generally a short term event and recovery needs to last a lifetime.

Our Vermont Recovery Center Network has supported the group forming a recovery center in Newport, and during our October meeting all the recovery centers voted to make the funding of a Newport center our funding priority. (please see attached document)

We have developed a data report which demonstrates statistically significant positive results and changes in the lives of people using recovery centers. (please see attached document) The data in the report is supported by actual success stories.

The 11 existing recovery centers all have recovery workers, funded by a federal SAMHSA demonstration grant. These "pathway guides" are helping people in opiate treatment to connect with recovery supports. Some of the people we are working with are maintaining lives in medication assisted recovery, while others are moving off medications into abstinence based recovery. We believe that it is critically important to create pathways toward abstinence based recovery as well as medication assisted recovery. The cost implications certainly support this position.

We are requesting that you try to find funding to support the last missing piece in creating Vermont's statewide recovery system. Thank you for your ongoing support of this growing solution for people whose lives have been negatively impacted by addictions.

Best ~ Mark Ames

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Network Coordinator

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Recovery Centers ~ Recovery Solutions

### During State FY 2014:

Recovery Centers hosted 179,234 visits from people seeking recovery & providing recovery support.

Centers average 1,358 visits per month.

On average:

- Centers were open 60 hours per week.
- Centers supported 19 active volunteers.
- Centers benefitted from 82 hrs a week of volunteer support.
- Visitors were 44% women & 56% men.

Network centers have many occasional visitors; an *average* of more than 100 regulars who come for 2 or 3 visits a week; and a small *revolving population* of high-utilization visitors coming daily, until their lives stabilize.

Our visitors get their lives in order, find jobs, find housing, repair the damage caused by addictive behaviors, and function in recovery as productive members of their communities, often for the first time in their lives.



### FY 2014 Sources of Recovery Center Support



● Local Community Support	\$402,814
● Donated Volunteer Time	\$1,061,293
● FY 14 State Recovery Center Grants	\$1,046,404
● FY 14 State Network Grant & SAMHSA Support	\$271,700



*Helping people who have experienced problems as a result of drugs and alcohol to find, maintain, and enhance their recovery through peer support, sober recreation, & educational opportunities.*

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### Recovery Center Success Stories & Data



VERMONT CONTINUES TO BE A PIONEER  
IN THE NATIONAL RECOVERY MOVEMENT.  
WE'VE CREATED A STATEWIDE  
RECOVERY SYSTEM WITH STANDARDS,  
ACCOUNTABILITY, AND EVIDENCE-BASED  
RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES.

Vermont's recovery centers have grown to become a front door to Vermont's treatment system, as well as a destination after treatment. In some cases, centers offer support until treatment is available; in others, our recovery supports provide a direct path to a life in recovery.

Recovery centers provide welcoming, safe places for people seeking recovery. We provide support for families and friends who are trying to help loved ones. Our trained recovery workers provide facilitated groups and recovery coaching. Centers are safe havens where people who are committed to recovery volunteer to support others.

**"I started using drugs when I was 8 years old.** I was prescribed opiates for pain as a child. I stopped for a long time and then an accident got me back into opiates for 5-6 years. Started at Brattleboro Retreat and decided to go cold turkey. **I've been clean for 100 days.** Most of my support came from Turning Point and the All Recovery meetings. People there care about me. I have my kids back in my life."

Travis H. Middlebury

**The evaluation data demonstrates statistically significant changes in the lives of people attending Recovery Centers.**

[See full report of these findings in the center section of this document]

The evaluation team from Evidence Based Solutions [EBS] was hired to analyze Participant Survey data collected in Vermont Recovery Centers between 2007 and 2014. Guests participating in the recovery support services were asked to provide general information about themselves, comment on their use of centers and their experiences in recovery. This report includes longitudinal data from 565 individuals who reported attending the recovery centers for themselves (vs. in support of someone else) and had completed the survey on multiple occasions over time. Data were collected over 7 years and the average length of time participants had been attending recovery centers upon completion of the survey was 1.5 years. The average visitor comes to the center 3 to 4 times every week. The results of this data analysis are highlighted throughout the following stories with a summary (centerfold) highlighting statistically significant changes in peoples' lives.

### Improved Health

**91%** of those responding to questions about health, reported improvement in their overall health and wellbeing.

**28%** of those responding have decreased or stopped smoking since coming to the center.

**69%** of those responding have started or increased physical exercise since coming to the center.

*Note: Data obtained above are from a sample of 282 of the 565 individuals in these questions were not always included in the Participant Survey.*

"My days are full of health, rewarding, and helpful events. I have a family who loves and respects me and my recovery. People can depend on me showing up. **I also have choices today.**"

Anne A.

Morrisville

"Before recovery **I didn't belong anywhere** – school, work or dysfunctional family – got stoned every night just to maintain.

My teacher 3 years ago put our non-traditional classroom at the **recovery center where I learned I could have fun & not get high.** I have graduated school and have a job. Stop at the center as much as I can, for a meeting or a game of pool. I can be me and not be a follower – my new friends are always there."

Drew H

Springfield

## Reduced Criminal Justice Involvement

46% of our visitors report past incidents of criminal justice involvement before coming to Recovery Centers & no criminal justice incidents since.

"When I was using, I was in and out of jail for relapsing. I was estranged from my family and friends. Life is so much simpler since I found recovery. **I have not gone to jail in almost 3 years** and have reconnected with family and friends. I have financial and emotional stability now. My life has improved 100%."

Sherri H. Rutland

"Before recovery I was homeless and stealing, in and out of jail – no connection with my children or family. Now my health is better, I have found a permanent job and housing, I have reconnected with my children and my parents."

The **Turning Point has given me a safe, supportive and sober place to grow in my recovery.** It helped me find many resources when I was in early recovery. They also helped me realize what I really wanted for my future."

Mindy M. Brattleboro

"My life was full of jail and institutions. Turning Point has been a big help – I volunteer there, and it gives me a sense of feeling safe. I wake up with hope and life happiness. I am learning how to love myself and take care of myself and others. **My recovery is giving me meaning and reason to live** on life's terms. Relationship with my family is improving."

Raul R. Burlington & Middlebury

Turning Point Center of Bennington County



Turning Point Center  
OF CHITTENDEN COUNTY



Turning Point Center  
Of Addison County Inc.

Turning Point  
OF FARMER COUNTY



TURNING POINT



Kingdom Recovery Center  
People, Place & Purpose Together



Turning Point  
OF ESSEX COUNTY

North  
Central  
Vermont



Recovery Center



TURNING POINT CENTER  
OF CENTRAL VERMONT

## Increased Employment

18% increase among the number of visitors employed.

58% of visitors who said they found work since coming to the Center, credited support or information provided at the Center with helping to find work.

"I was depressed, homeless, isolated and lonely. I was a chronic relapsing, I had no joy in my life. I now have my own apartment, I got my license back and finally have my dream job, I work with others who have addiction problems. **I don't know where I would be if I hadn't walked into TPC.**"

T. C. Burlington

"Turning Point helped me find recovery – I have turned my life around. I am 20 months sober have made new friendships, am working my way through my legal issues with great success. **I have a job and my life is headed in a positive direction.** The people at Turning Point make me feel important and no longer ashamed of my addiction. They helped me become a productive citizen instead of a danger to my community. I am thankful that Turning Point was there when I was in need."

Don Barre

"Before recovery I was a high-functioning alcoholic for over 15 years. In the last year of my drinking, I was drinking 24-7, health declined including liver damage and I lost my long-time job."

Life has gotten progressively better. I am optimistic, caring, hard-working and motivated. It's great having a place to go to avoid triggering people and places while talking with others in recovery. **I've been volunteering helping others, and have started a new and wonderful career.**"

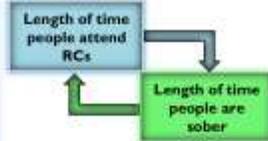
T. R. Brattleboro

## Vermont Recovery Network: Our story of helping others find & maintain recovery

Here is a summary highlighting statistically significant findings over time.

### Increased Sobriety

Participants who attend RCs for longer periods of time also report longer periods of sobriety ( $r = .87, p < .001$ ).<sup>\*\*\*</sup>



- 65%** of participants felt RCs helped them **FIND** their recovery
- 76%** of participants felt RCs helped **REDUCE THE FREQUENCY & LENGTH** of their relapses
- 91%** of participants felt RCs helped **ENHANCE & MAINTAIN** their recovery

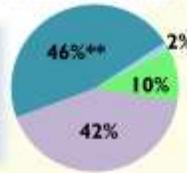
There was a significant increase in sobriety over time based on self report of days sober ( $t=5.4, p < .001$ ). This was because 67% of participants maintained their sobriety between Time 1 & the FollowUp & another 14% of participants gained sobriety.



*Note: The longitudinal study has several limitations including data were all self-report and data were collected using a convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling means that participants were recruited as they utilized the Recovery Centers. Lastly, there was no set follow up time point for data collection. At the same time, surveys were completed anonymously in an effort to ensure participants responded freely.*

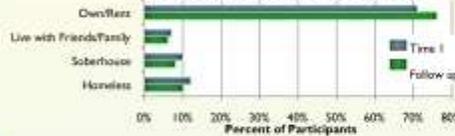
### Decreased Criminal Involvement

Statistically significant decrease among participants with previous incidents or criminal involvement.<sup>\*\*</sup>



- Had incidents or criminal involvement before, but none since coming to RC
- No incidents or criminal involvement ever
- Continued incidents (both before and since coming to the RC)
- Incidents or criminal involvement only since coming to RC

### Increase in Stable Housing



Although not statistically significant, there was an increase over time in the percent of participants who own/rent their own home. This is impressive given the scarcity of affordable housing.

### Increased Employment



From Time 1 to Follow up, there was a significant increase of 18% among those who were employed.<sup>\*\*</sup>

### Other Good News

- 28%** of participants decreased or stopped smoking since coming to the RCs
- 69%** of participants started or increased physical exercise since coming to the RCs
- 71%** of participants' family relationships improved since coming to the RCs
- 91%** of participants overall wellness & health improved since coming to the RCs

For questions please contact Dr. Jody Karon of EBS at (802) 999-1676.

## Improved Mental Health

80% of visitors report current or past participation in outpatient/inpatient mental health services.

46% of those responding to questions about prescription drug use reported having used anti-depressant, anti-anxiety, or anti-psychotic medications.

### "I was suicidal and wanted to die.

Went to Rehab & Detox at least 4 times, overdosed 3 times and was saved by ambulance. 2 serious suicide attempts.

**Everything is different now** – I have my own apartment and am able to work. I know I have a safe place to go. I can find support and find others who understand and accept who I was and encourage who I am and want to be. **I am lucky to have a Recovery Coach** – she is a very big support and a friend to me."

Amber H.

Middlebury

### "Life was chaotic, I had terrible anxiety and depression which I treated with substances. I am now on medication to treat my chronic depression and anxiety. My life is markedly more stable now. I have long periods of peace. I have hobbies and mended my relationship with my mother. **I have hopes & aspirations.**"

M.M.

Brattleboro

## Increased Housing

50% of those who said they found housing since coming to the Recovery Center credited the Center with helping them find it.

**"I was living and sleeping on the streets. I now have a nice apartment and support my three cats. I have consistency in my employment, and am engaging in healthy relationships. TPC helps me connect with resources in the community that strengthen my recovery. I have integrity and can face life's issues in a positive way."**

Jedediah P.

Brattleboro

**"I was an everyday IV user, lost my daughter to DCF, and was homeless. Overdosed regularly. My life had been a lot more manageable. I have steady housing and am working a full time job. I am facing my legal issues including DCF. Trying to mend what relationships I can. Turning Point is important because there aren't many other recovery based programs in town."**

John St.

Middlebury

### "My life before recovery was complete hell. **I wanted to kill myself.**

Since I got recovery, **my life has improved in every way.** I've learned to love myself and others. I facilitate groups and am a peer coach."

Karen Z.

St. Johnsbury

"Before recovery my life was a constant battle, suffering from my habit, struggling to maintain and hide it. I fell into a life of lying, cheating, stealing, self harm, depression and everything else associated with using. I experienced multiple overdoses, DCF involvement, and then homelessness. It was horrible. Since working a solid program my life has continually progressed. I joined a sober house, which was an amazing blessing. Having a supportive community helps back me up on doing the next right thing. I am increasingly **reunited with my daughter, building a solid parental foundation with her father and rebuilding lost relationships with my own parents.** The recovery centers provide me with a safe environment – I spend my time there to avoid users, triggers and unsafe people."

Kelly O.

Middlebury & Burlington

"I started drinking when I was 16. By 2009 I was addicted to crack cocaine. I have two sons. At the time, my two-and-a-half-year old was living with me in this environment and my 12-year-old son had written me a letter saying he didn't want to see me anymore. After multiple relapses, including a scary six months where everyone in my family thought I was dead, I finally got myself into Willow Grove and the programs at the Turning Point.

I spent every waking moment that was free at the Turning Point. They helped to teach me how to have fun without the drinking and drugs. Becoming sober was a complete shift in my mentality – it is not just not drinking. It was a complete overhaul of everything that I think and believe. The Turning Point is a safe haven. It's been almost 4.5 years that I've been sober. In all, it took me 16 years to get one year of sobriety. **I went from being a homeless crack addicted mom on the brink of death that abandoned her children, to an honor student and an amazing mom.** I'm a good role model for other women who are addicts that have children. The people at the Turning Point made this all possible – these people believed in me when I could not believe in myself."

Lisa C.

White River Junction

## Improved Relationships

71% of those responding reported improved family relationships since coming to the center.

*Note: Data obtained above are from a sample of 282 of the 563 individuals as these questions were not always included in the Participant Survey*

"I used to drink and use drugs every day. I was abusive to my wife and was always getting arrested for domestic violence. I had no friends. **My life is totally new** – I go to meetings and **volunteer at the Turning Point Center**. I like to help out people, it's my way of giving back. I am living a great clean and sober life."

Scott K. Bennington

**"My life was hell before coming to the recovery center.** I was struggling with raising my 2 year old son. I spent many nights at bars, eventually ending up with a DUI.

I have a new happiness; I attend meetings and volunteer at Turning Point. I am graduating with my Associates Degree and will continue my path to Mental Health Counselor. **The Turning Point Recovery Center has given me a new life,** and a chance to see my full potential – I have of this new life". The center has given me growth and inspiration – I go into local schools to speak and tell my story!"

Brandy C. Springfield

"There wasn't a life, **it was all about getting high at any cost.** Now, I've bonded with my children, family, and people in general. Being around others in recovery is a big part of making life easier. **Turning Point works.**"

H.T. Brattleboro

**"Before recovery I was on the verge of losing my husband, children, and home.** I would drink, black out and towards the end, I would end up in jail. I became suicidal. The recovery center is very important to my recovery – it provides a safe environment and I enjoy volunteering my time at the center. I have gained the love and trust of my husband and children back. **I have gained my own self respect back.**"

Laura S. Morrisville

## Treatment System Utilization

21% of visitors report never attending treatment.

76% reported past treatment for substance abuse.

23% of visitors had been in treatment during the last 30 days.

**"I bottomed out hard at 16, but never went to treatment.** I have been clean & sober in Recovery for over 25 years. I recently discovered the VT Recovery Network of Centers. My recovery has taken a wonderful new direction. I have become a Recovery Coach & am really excited about this approach to helping others, especially kids."

Jen G. Brattleboro

"I lost everything and felt like a failure. I lost my license, job, health and was in jail. **After treatment I got involved with the recovery center, and am now a pathway guide** helping others like me."

Larry B. Springfield

**Pathways To Recovery Project:** OUR NETWORK RECEIVED FEDERAL FUNDING TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR VERMONTERS IN OPIATE TREATMENT. PEOPLE IN OPIATE TREATMENT NOW HAVE CONSISTENT ACCESS TO WELCOMING PEER RECOVERY GROUPS AND RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES. ALL OF VERMONT'S RECOVERY CENTERS NOW HOST HALF-TIME "PATHWAY GUIDES," PAID BY VRN, WHO ARE WORKING WITH OPIATE TREATMENT PROVIDERS AND RECEIVING REFERRALS FOR ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT AND/OR FACILITATED PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT. MEET ANOTHER OF OUR PATHWAY GUIDES:

"Before recovery, I had no life. I was unemployable for 5 years, didn't have stable housing. Had little relationship with my family. Life was very dark, lonely and hopeless. I now have a life and a purpose. I have a relationship with my family. I work in the field of recovery, helping those who are still struggling. At age 48 I am going back to school to get my degree and have gotten all A's. **The recovery center provides a safe environment** to come and be with others who are seeking recovery. It has also doubled the amount of meetings and support groups in our area."

Hal P. St. Albans



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## **Vermont Recovery Network Budgetary Priorities for FY-15**

**Newport Recovery Center** – Members of the recovering community and supporting community partners have mobilized in Newport, Vermont. They have formed a board of directors, with supporting committees, and enlisted willing volunteers who are committed to opening and maintaining a community recovery center. When Vermont’s Network of recovery centers was originally conceived, the plan included this 12<sup>th</sup> center, which is now preparing to come on-line in Newport.

**The current 11 Vermont recovery centers voted that funding for a new recovery center in Newport was their top funding priority for FY-15.**

The Vermont Recovery Network’s developmental process with all of the recovery centers included budgetary research at all centers, which has determined that the appropriate base funding required for delivering uniform peer recovery supports is \$120,000. This minimum will maintain an appropriate facility, a full-time director, and the trained peer workers who maintain a presence for the hours the center is open. In other parts of New England and across the country, centers are being developed with budgets 2 ½ times larger than this proposed minimum, but by utilizing devoted community volunteers, we have been able to prove the effectiveness of delivering less expensive peer-based recovery support services.

[https://vtrecoverynetwork.org/PDF/Making\\_VRN\\_Vision\\_sustainable.pdf](https://vtrecoverynetwork.org/PDF/Making_VRN_Vision_sustainable.pdf)

**Bringing recovery support services to scale** – To fund this additional recovery center at \$120,000 and bring Vermont’s existing 11 centers up to this minimum funding level would require an additional \$393,596. At current funding levels, the addition of a Newport recovery center would cost \$92,000.

The expanded delivery of recovery supports continues to improve on the outcomes, which initially demonstrated recovery centers’ capacity for reducing the societal costs of addictions. Our growing understanding of these reduced justice costs, healthcare costs, and rates of recidivism after treatment makes it important that we couple increasingly robust recovery services with other services. It stands to reason that providing ongoing supports for people with chronic conditions will improve outcomes. The advent of the Results-Based Accountability era and the need to improve treatment and justice outcomes makes it a natural fit to combine ongoing telephone recovery supports that are coupled with a full menu of recovery support services, which should include an increased capacity for supporting family members and interventions. We believe that these approaches hold promise for further reducing the societal costs of addictive disease. We would welcome an opportunity to expand on this approach, but appreciate that with the current budget constraints, requests for support in these areas might appear to be unrealistic.

The proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of 34 recovery centers in the northeast, written by Dr. John Kelley from Harvard and Massachusetts General Hospital, has been funded. He has adopted some of our data collection approaches in his new study. Vermont’s 11 recovery centers are a part of this study, and we are grateful for VDH/ADAP’s offer of \$20,000 in additional support to enhance Dr. Kelly’s efforts and create a report specifically looking at the results achieved by recovery centers in Vermont.