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Robert Purvis, Executive Director  
tpccvbarre@gmail.com  
Crystal Raymond, Asst. Director  
crturningpoint05641@gmail.com

[www.tpccv.org](http://www.tpccv.org)

489 N. Main St. ♦ P.O. Box 887 ♦ Barre, VT 05641-0887 ♦ (802) 479-7373

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## House Committee on Judiciary

### *Update on the Vermont Recovery Network: Progress and Current Needs*

Testimony of Robert Purvis, Executive Director  
Turning Point Center of Central Vermont

*March 14, 2018*

My name is Bob Purvis and I am executive director of the Turning Point Center of Central Vermont, which is one of twelve addiction recovery centers in Vermont. Nine centers are currently members of the Vermont Recovery Network (VRN). I am also a member of the Committee of Executive Directors of the VRN.

I am here to talk about the key role that Vermont's recovery centers and their Network have come to play—both in our health care system and the broader human services systems. Peer addiction recovery services have become integral to Vermont's innovative criminal justice programs from Drug Treatment Courts to restorative justice programs, as well as human services programs serving families and youth. In the addiction treatment field, our Pathways to Recovery program has become indispensable to Vermont's nation leading "Hub and Spoke" system of medication assisted treatment (MAT) for people who are addicted to opioids.

When I talk about the successes and challenges of our recovery centers, as reflected in our data, I am referring to all twelve recovery centers, because while three centers do not currently belong to the VRN—the centers in Burlington, Morrisville, and White River Junction—they collect and report to VRN the same data as the nine member centers and they participate in VRN's major statewide programs.

### **Recovery centers have come a long way in a short period of time.**

In 2012, the legislature tasked VRN with developing program standards and core services based on national best practices, and adopting performance measures, in return for an increase in our base

funding. Following the successful completion of this task, our funding increased gradually from \$50,900 percent in FY 2012 to a median grant of \$92,685 in FY 2015. We haven't received an increase since. The increases in funding enabled us to anchor our volunteer teams with trained supervisors, extend our hours of operation, expand our services, enrich our partnerships, and attract additional funding. The appended report, *Vermont Recovery Network Program Report—January 2018*, summarizes the growth of the VRN and highlights our accomplishments along the way.

In a report published last year, titled *Recovery Center Success Stories & Data, 2007—2016*, the Center for Behavioral Health Integration (C4BHI) evaluated data collected from Participant Surveys administered to visitors in Vermont's recovery centers. The report includes longitudinal data from 795 individuals who completed the survey multiple times over the 9 year period between 2007 and 2016. The results show statistically significant changes in people's lives: improved health, reduced criminal justice involvement, increased employment, improved mental health, and more. This report is appended to this Testimony.

In addition to these compelling data, this report also includes numerous success stories of individuals who have achieved long term recovery through involvement with a recovery center. This report has been supplemented with data and recovery stories for 2017 in the appended report titled, *Recovery Works*.

## **Recovery centers have played a key role in Vermont's response to the Opiate Crisis.**

In early 2013, as Vermont was preparing to introduce the "Hub and Spoke" system for providing medication assisted treatment (MAT) to Vermonters addicted to opiates, the Vermont Recovery Network won a federal grant from SAMHSA with which we created a statewide recovery system for individuals undergoing MAT. Called Pathways to Recovery, this project placed a highly-trained, halftime Pathway Guide in each of Vermont's recovery centers. The Pathway Guides created recovery supports for individuals on MAT, established relationships with regional Hub clinics and related Spoke doctors, and provided links to other recovery center programs and the larger recovery community in each area.

Early on, the Pathways Project gained national notice as an essential component of Vermont's vanguard opiate treatment system. In 2015, Tom Hill, then acting director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) within SAMHSA, noted that Vermont's Pathways to Recovery project was one of only two programs in the nation that integrated peer supports with opiate treatment — and the

only statewide system. More recently, Pathways received high praise at the January 5, 2016, New Hampshire Presidential Primary Forum on Addiction and the Heroin Epidemic . In his presentation to the Forum, David R. Gastfriend MD, Scientific Advisor to the Treatment Research Institute and Chief Architect of CONTINUUM™, for the American Society of Addiction Medicine, praised Vermont’s Hub and Spoke system as an important innovation, but went further to say that, in combination with VRN’s recovery supports, what Vermont is doing is “state of the art”.

Since the SAMHSA grant ended two years ago, the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs has continued to fund the Pathways project. Pages 9 and 10 of the *Recovery Center Success Stories* report referenced above demonstrate why: not only do the data from the SAMHSA grant show significant improvement by participants in recovery capital, employment, housing, and other measures, the “Hub and Spoke” MAT providers surveyed “overwhelmingly affirm that for them to proceed without the Pathway Guide support would be a hardship and affect the supports they are able to provide their clients”.

Thanks to an infusion of federal funds in the Twenty First Century Cures Act, the Pathways project will be fully funded with all twelve recovery centers participating in Fy 2019. However, this program funding does not expand the overall capacity of our recovery centers.

### **Recovery services are increasingly in demand as a component of criminal justice reform.**

Over the past six years Vermont has increasingly focused on releasing nonviolent offenders from prison early—or not incarcerating them at all, as pursuant to Act 195 of 2014—and getting them into community-based services that can help them become healthy, productive citizens. With approximately 70% to 80% of offenders incarcerated in Vermont prisons because of drug-related charges, our recovery centers are increasingly being called upon to provide recovery supports for them as they attempt to change their lives in recovery. This is reflected in increased collaborations with Diversion, Drug Treatment Courts, Community Justice Centers, and the new Pre-Trial Monitors. In some cases, recovery centers have won contracts to provide specific services, such as the Barre Turning Point’s contract with the Washington County Drug Treatment Court Enhancement project; in others, centers have received private funding, such as the Rutland Turning Point’s \$100,000 grant to provide recovery supports for inmates at Marble Valley Correctional Facility. In most cases, however, recovery centers are

expected to provide recovery supports for these new programs as part of their general operations. This has become more and more difficult as we have reached our capacity with current State funding.

### ***Conclusion.***

In a few short years, and with relatively modest funding, Vermont's recovery centers have grown from a small, volunteer-driven, grassroots movement to a statewide system of leading-edge recovery centers supported by a nationally-recognized network organization. We have established organizational and program standards that meet national best practices; deep accountability to our funders and local communities across the State; and we have implemented evidence-based practices that are providing cost-effective help to Vermonters not available anywhere else. Our centers are both front doors to treatment and destinations after treatment—and for many people, recovery supports are all that are needed to help them get into a meaningful life in recovery.

This has taken a great deal of work over the years, but it would not have been possible without the early and continued support of visionaries in the Vermont Legislature. We thank you for making this possible—and we now ask you to help us expand our recovery services to meet the urgent demand. We're in our fourth year of level-funding of our State grants, and while we are increasingly able to attract outside funding for special programs, we have reached the limits of our sustainable capacity, yet demand for our services continues to grow. The data in the appended reports demonstrate that recovery centers are saving the State money in real time through decreased use of social services and involvement with the criminal justice system. It is no exaggeration to say that when a recovery center keeps two people out of the criminal justice system for a year, it has more than paid for its State grant.

We hope you will support us in our efforts to obtain an increase in our State funding in this legislative session. We are asking for an increase of \$60,000 for each of Vermont's twelve recovery centers and an equal amount for the Vermont Recovery Network. This totals \$780,00 to significantly enhance recovery services that are available to every Vermonter who needs them.



**Appendix 1  
R. Purvis Testimony  
02-14-18**

**Vermont Recovery Network Program Report—January 2018  
Recovery Centers: Saving Lives and Saving Vermont Money**

The Vermont Recovery Network is a national model for an innovative, strength-based approach to healing addictions. Vermont’s system of recovery centers—the country’s only statewide recovery system of its kind—has evolved from a grassroots movement to become integral to Vermont’s system for supporting people in recovery and their families. This growth is thanks to the legislature’s support of our work. We’ve been able to show that recovery supports save lives and give hope. When people heal, learn life skills, and adopt a healthy lifestyle, they no longer engage in unhealthy behaviors. They thrive, and so do our communities.

The growth in peer supports our centers are able to offer is **thanks to the legislature’s support of our work**. In 2012, the legislature tasked the network with developing program standards and core services based on national best practices, and adopting performance measures, in return for an increase in our base funding. Consequently, our funding has increased from \$50,900 per center in FY 2012 to a median budget of \$92,685 since FY 2015. The increase in funding helped us to anchor our volunteer teams with trained supervisors, increase our availability, expand our services, enrich our partnerships, and attract additional funding. The graphs highlight some specifics about how our center supports have increased.

**Vermont Recovery Network Successes and Partnerships**

Vermont’s position as a national leader in treatment and recovery—our Hub and Spoke and statewide recovery systems—helps us to attract federal funding to pilot programs and develop sophisticated systems.

- SAMHSA, ADAP support for Pathways to Recovery: centers partner with Hubs and Spokes to combat opioid addiction
- CURES Emergency Department pilots (Barre, Burlington, and Bennington): provide coaching to patients with addiction issues.
- SAMHSA support for Telephone Recovery Support pilot program: helps people leaving treatment who are at a risk of relapse. This telephonic solution means a lifeline in a rural state like ours.
- SAMHSA support for governance and infrastructure development.
- Governor Phil Scott’s Opioid Coordination Council.

**Innovative Center Partnerships**

Vibrant relationships with partners have generated shared programs, sometimes funded, onsite at centers or offsite at partner locations.

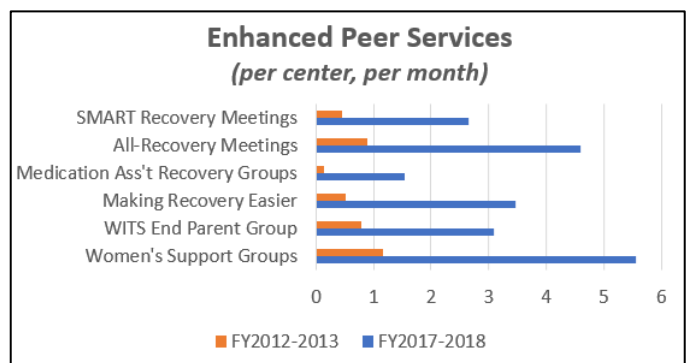
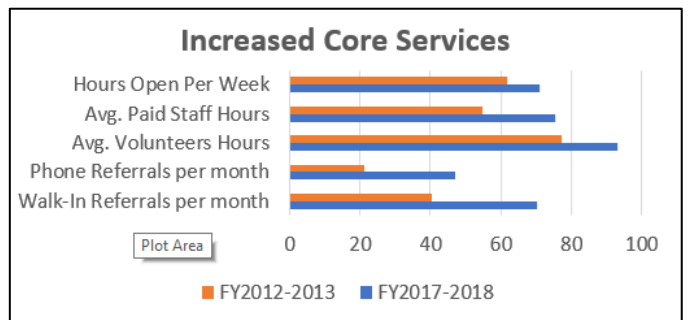
- Rutland: A \$100,000 grant funds recovery coaching and SMART groups for inmates at the Marble Valley Correctional Facility.
- Newport and Bennington: Regional Prevention Partnership grants support drug take-back programs and family/youth services.
- Barre: A \$12,000 contract with Washington County Drug Treatment Court Enhancement project provides an evidence-based workshop series and recovery coaching.
- Brattleboro: A \$15,000 Thomson Trust grant funds infrastructure and board development.
- Springfield: A \$10,000 Holt Foundation grant funds satellite recovery services in Bellows Falls. HCRS funds \$10,000 for recovery supports for transitional house residents.

**Gratitude and a Request**

We’re doing more—expanding our reach and establishing innovative peer-support programs—but we’ve stretched our modest resources to their limit. Centers have been level funded since 2015, although the demand for our supports continues to grow in the face of the opioid epidemic. We provide workforce-development opportunities, but our trained peers go elsewhere because we can’t pay them—not pay them enough, but rather pay them at all. Our volunteer teams struggle to manage demands. More funding would allow us to continue offering Vermonters healing solutions: We help people turn away from the revolving doors of emergency rooms, detoxification programs, treatment, and corrections and reach instead to less costly, life-saving supports, saving Vermont money. To fulfill our promise, we request an additional \$60,000 per center so we can meet the expectations of our communities, our partners, and our funders. Our centers could then retain experienced peers and provide services our capacity won’t currently allow.

**Between FY2012 and FY2017**

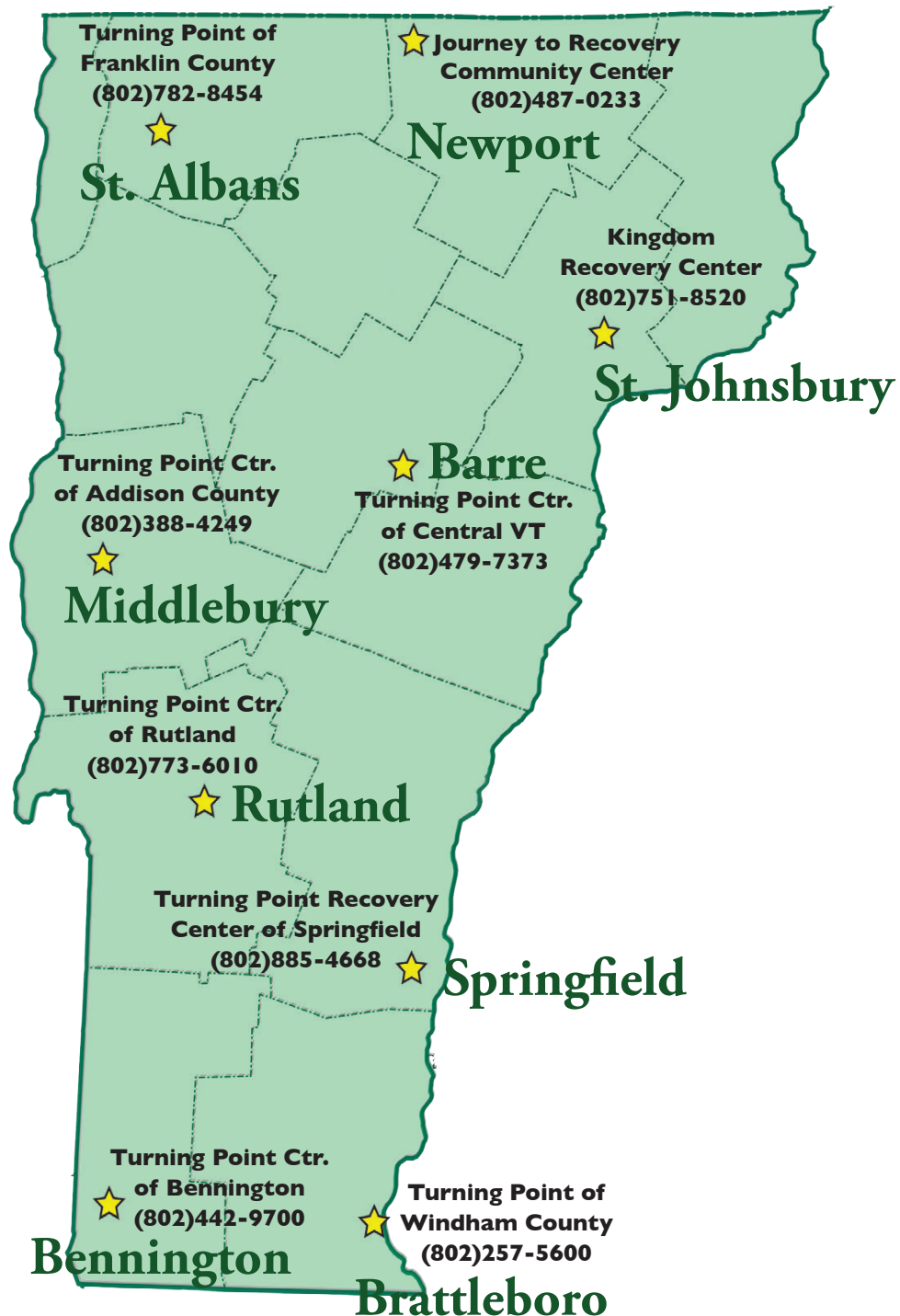
- Paid staff hours increased 37%.
- Volunteer hours increased 20%.
- Center hours increased 14%.
- Walk-in referrals increased by 73%, and phone referrals more than doubled!





Recovery Centers ~ Recovery Solutions

# Recovery Center Success Stories & Data, 2007–2016



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. RECOVERY IS PART OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE, INCLUDING PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, TREATMENT, AND RECOVERY.

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.

Vermont Recovery Network (VRN) hired the evaluation team from the Center for Behavioral Health Integration (C4BHI) to analyze Participant Survey data collected in Vermont Recovery Centers between 2007 and 2016.

"The most important word in my early recovery was: NO. No to drugs, no to addicted friends and lovers, no to anything that might trigger a relapse. But after a while I realized that in order to get back what I'd lost, I had to start saying: YES. **I had to remember who I'd wanted to be in the first place.** I became a motorcycle mechanic, then an artist, a carpenter, a cabinetmaker, and finally a photographer. I was determined to recover my sense of purpose, and myself as well. I began the process of recovery in 1970, a long time ago. I'm still working on it."

~ Michael P., Brattleboro

**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 statistical analyses included in this report were conducted by the Center for Behavioral Health Integration (C4BHI) and examine Participant Survey data collected by recovery centers (RCs) belonging to the Vermont Recovery Network (VRN). Guests participating in recovery support services were asked to provide general information about themselves and comment on their use of centers and their recovery experiences. This report includes longitudinal data from 795 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 9 years; the average length of time participants had been attending recovery centers upon completion of the survey was 1.7 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 (see centerfold) highlighting statistically significant changes in peoples' lives.

## Improved Health

**93%** of those responding to questions about health, reported improvement in their overall health and wellbeing

**31%** of those responding have decreased or stopped smoking since coming to the center.

**72%** of those responding have started or increased physical exercise since coming to the center.

*Note: Data obtained above are from a sample of 539 of the 795 individuals as these questions were not always included in the Participant Survey.*

“I was isolated, lonely, and feeling guilty, anxious, and depressed. I was in and out of rehabs and still struggling. Focusing on recovery from traumatic events has improved my way of thinking. My self-esteem has improved. I go out for daily walks. I communicate better. I am able to set healthy boundaries and attain goals productively. I accept my faults and can reframe them as strengths. The Turning Point is a place where I feel accepted and useful.”

~ Kerin, Rutland

## Supportive Treatments

42% of visitors were taking anti-anxiety, anti-depressant, or anti-psychotic medications.

83% of visitors report current or past participation in mental health treatment services.

79% reported past treatment for substance abuse.

25% of visitors had been in treatment for substance abuse during the last 30 days.

17% of visitors indicated that they were taking part in medication-assisted treatment.



## Reduced Criminal Justice Involvement

**61%** of our visitors report past incidents of criminal justice involvement before coming to Recovery Centers & only **11%** report criminal involvement after attending an RC.

“I watched my dad kill himself. My mom was in and out of jail. I’ve been in and out of jails and rehab, living a life of crime and despair. I could stop using alone. I never could get enough.

Now I’m in a recovery house, I have my family back, and I get to be an aunt today. I live; I don’t just exist. I’m happy today. I’m going back to college, and I’m starting to find the real me.”

~ Tara F., Rutland

“My life was a mess. I went from just smoking pot to selling heroin for gang members. I got caught by federal marshals and sentenced to two years of federal probation and lost my apartment. Since finding recovery, I’ve been a volunteer in my community for a local soup kitchen and the Kingdom Recovery Center. I’ve had no legal issues and have proven myself to the community. Most important, I have become employed at Kingdom Recovery Center and taken many trainings and workshops to be a better person and help others in recovery.”

~ Sue Ann, St. Johnsbury

## Increased Employment

**60%** 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.

There is a significant increase from **33%** to **38%** in employment.

This represents a **15%** growth within the group of individuals employed.

## Recovery Center Pilot: Job Skills Partnership with Voc Rehab

A new demonstration project builds on the already-robust relationship between recovery centers and Voc Rehab. Employment consultants from Voc Rehab provide job skills resources to recovery center guests, and peer-support workers and coaches provide recovery supports. The goal is to help people succeed in their recovery while they’re succeeding in their new employment.

Preparing for the job search and securing employment are just the first steps in a critical new phase of a person’s life. The new employee then faces a new community of coworkers, relationships with new authority figures, new performance expectations, and the demands of juggling family life, a work life, and a recovery program. Recovery can be jeopardized during this transitional period, and continued employment depends on continued recovery. Our evidence shows that peer supports can help maintain and enhance a person’s recovery experience. We’ll collect data to demonstrate our success in helping people secure stable, meaningful employment while they continue to maintain and enhance their recovery.

## Workforce Development

Vermont's recovery centers collaborate with the Department of Labor to provide people with work experiences so they can build job skills in a recovery-friendly environment. Centers also welcome volunteers who are fulfilling their community service requirements for Reach Up, diversion programs, or probation programs. In addition, college interns and participants from programs like Vermont Associates for Training & Development, an agency that provides work experiences for people aged 55 or over, learn and work at centers.

"After a difficult first year of recovery, including three relapses, I went to Turning Point of Windham County to volunteer. This became a true "turning point" for me and my recovery. Helping others in recovery quickly went from being a healthy recovery activity to a new and amazing career. In just three years, I went from being unemployed to working as a volunteer coordinator, a recovery coach, a pathway guide, and then the project manager of VRN's Pathways to Recovery project. Through connections I made in these roles and doing outreach, I was also hired by our local Hub in April 2016 and became a state certified apprentice addiction counselor (CAAP) and am now on my way to a BA in psychology and becoming a certified alcohol and drug counselor (CADC). I believe that none of this would have happened for me if it wasn't for the Turning Point of Windham County."

~ Brian C., Brattleboro

## Success Stories

Hundreds of volunteers have graduated to employment after gaining invaluable work experience at the recovery centers. Many have entered the recovery field to share their experience. Here are a few examples:

- Jed started as a volunteer, became a recovery coach, became a Pathway Guide, and now works as a counselor for HCRS.
- M.L. started as a volunteer in Franklin County (in her words unemployable). She became a part-time assistant, attended Recovery Coach Academy, completed Train the Trainers, served as data processor for the Pathway Guide program, and now has accepted a position as MAT Care Coordinator at Northwestern Medical Center.
- Larry started out as a center volunteer and now serves as Transition House manager, recovery coach coordinator, and Pathway Guide in Springfield.
- A former recovery coach from Brattleboro now works for West Central Behavioral Health.
- Jim was a guest at the transition house, became a plant manager for a large company, and now serves on the center's board of directors.

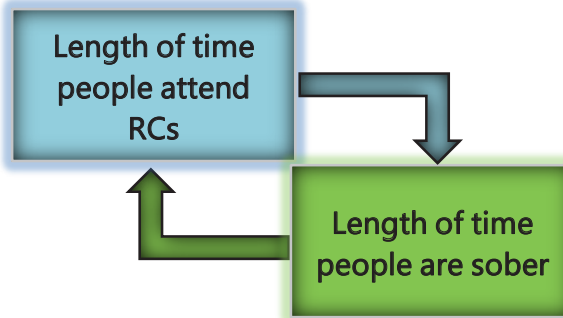
# Vermont Recovery Network: Our story of

Enclosed here is a summary highlighting statistically significant findings over time.

Deci

## Increased Sobriety

Participants who attend RCs for longer periods of time also report longer periods of sobriety ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ).\*\*\*



Statistically significant decrease among participants with previous incidents or criminal involvement ( $p < .001$ ).

73%

of participants felt RCs helped them FIND their recovery

78%

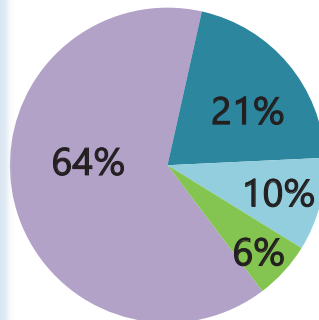
of participants felt RCs helped REDUCE THE FREQUENCY & LENGTH of their relapses

93%

of participants felt RCs helped ENHANCE & MAINTAIN their recovery

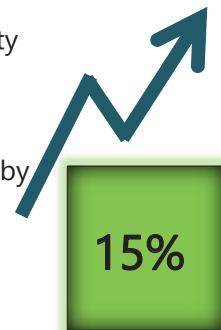
- Own/rent
- Live with friends/family
- Soberhouse
- Homeless

There was a significant increase in sobriety over time based on self report of days sober ( $t=6.3, p < .001$ ). This was because 64% of participants maintained their sobriety between Time 1 & the FollowUp & another 21% of participants gained sobriety.



- Maintained sobriety consistently over time
- Achieved sobriety by FollowUp
- Relapsed
- Never achieved sobriety greater than

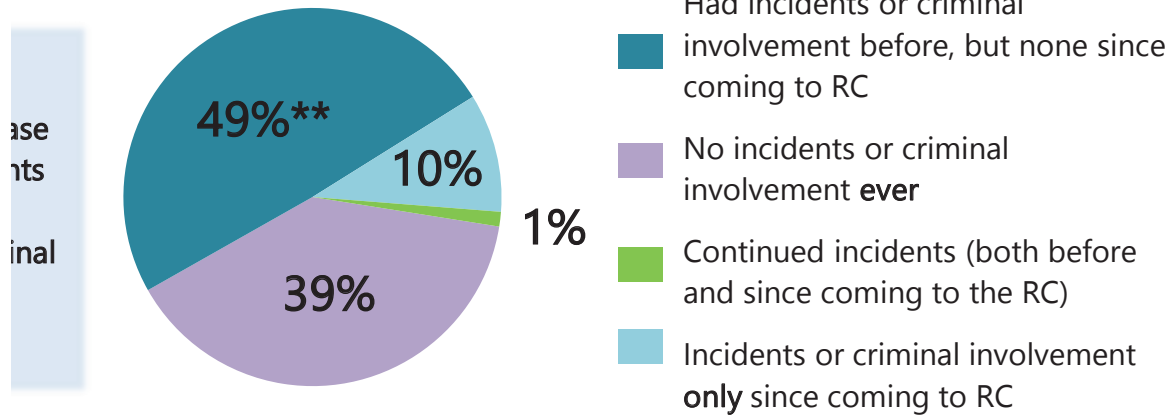
## Increased



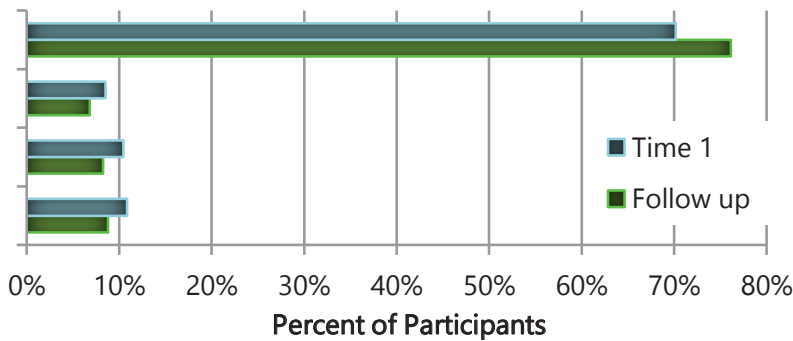
*Note: The longitudinal study has several limitations including data were all self-report and data were participants were recruited as they utilized the Recovery Centers. Lastly, there was no set follow up effort to ensure participants responded openly.*

# helping others find & maintain recovery

## Increased Criminal Involvement



## Increase in Stable Housing



A greater number of individuals moved towards owning or renting, decreasing the number of individuals in the 3 other categories ( $X^2 = 18.9, p < .01$ ).

## Employment

From Time 1 to Follow up, The group of individuals who were employed grew by 15%.

31%

of participants **decreased or stopped smoking** since coming to the RCs

72%

of participants **started or increased physical exercise** since coming to the RCs

75%

of participants' **family relationships improved** since coming to the RCs

93%

of participants **overall wellness & health improved** since coming to the RCs

## Other Good News

For questions please contact Dr. Jody Kamon of the Center for Behavioral Health Integration, LLC at (802) 999 - 1676.

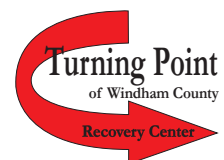
... collected using a convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling means that ... time point for data collection. At the same time, surveys were completed anonymously in an



Turning Point Recovery Center  
Springfield, Vermont



Turning Point Center of Bennington County



## Increased Housing

**31%** of people who attend RC report finding housing after coming to the RC, and **53%** of those individuals report that the RC helped them find their housing. Over time, there was a **8.6%** increase—from **70%** to **76%**—in people who own or rent their home. This was balanced by a **6%** decrease in temporary arrangements such as living with friends/family, living in sober housing, and homelessness. These changes are statistically significant.

“My life was hell. I hated myself and the world around me. My whole day revolved around getting more drugs. I never had peace in my life. I was always worried either I would run out of drugs, get my door kicked in by cops, be “sick,” or go to jail. I had no friends and no real life. Now I have a house I’ve lived in for almost three years. I’ve started a business with steady work. I actually like myself today and enjoy my life. I have a huge support system and loving, real friends in recovery. I am no longer on probation. I am a member of society. I can walk with my head held high within my community. I am not ashamed of myself anymore. I see that my possibilities are endless, where before I thought I was hopeless and would go nowhere but jail or death.”  
~ Stephanie R., St. Albans

“My life was absolute hell! I was in the process of losing my daughter. I was in a very abusive relationship. My family was not happy with me. I had no job, car, or money. Death would have been much better than living. I was on probation and extremely hopeless. Today, life is amazing! My daughter and I have a safe, stable place to live. I have an amazing job in the recovery community. I have healthy relationships with my family and have made awesome new relationships in the fellowship. I have responsibilities in my home group. My life has changed for the better in so many ways! I’ve been off probation for almost two years and don’t have the feeling of hopelessness. I’ve met amazing people through the center. I was introduced to so many meetings here that saved my life. I don’t think I would be alive today if I didn’t walk through Turning Point’s door.”  
~ Katie D., St. Albans

## Improved Relationships

75% of those responding reported improved family relationships since coming to the center.

*Note: Data obtained above are from a sample of 539 of the 795 individuals as these questions were not always included in the Participant Survey.*

“Since finding recovery, I have peace and serenity. I am 100% available to my loved ones. I’m earning back trust and confidence from others. I am accountable. I like myself today. I’m healthy and focused. I am the role model I strive to be for my daughter.”  
~ Savannah, Newport

“Before recovery, I was depressed, hopeless, homeless, always working, but always poor. I was unable to perform academically or vocationally, lonely and lost. I was an unresponsive and unavailable mother.  
Now I have stable relationships, have continued my college education, and am a positive and present mother for my child. I’m going on four years sober after 11 years of opiate addiction. The recovery center helped me learn a new way of living and thinking that I never could have achieved on my own.”  
~ Jessica T., Middlebury

“I was so miserable before recovery and didn’t even know. My last 19 years were surrounded by people who drank, did drugs, and made it difficult to get sober. I felt stuck. I had no job, no money, no way to get my daily needs met. Now I’m working on my diploma, and then I would like to go to college. I haven’t been sober this long since I started using at 15, and I’m 34. I’ve learned it’s best to be on my own, which is another first for me, and it’s great. I have healthy relationships, and if I don’t think a person is good for my sobriety, I’m not scared to let them know, or I just don’t be around them. In a sense, I’m sculpting who I am and who I want to be, and how I want people to treat me. My recovery is good, but the Turning Point recovery center made it great. Turning Point has been a safe, sober place I can always go to find support. Lots of days, I could have used and thought about it, but instead, I used what I learned at the Turning Point and through the Pathway Guide.”  
~ Crystal D., Barre

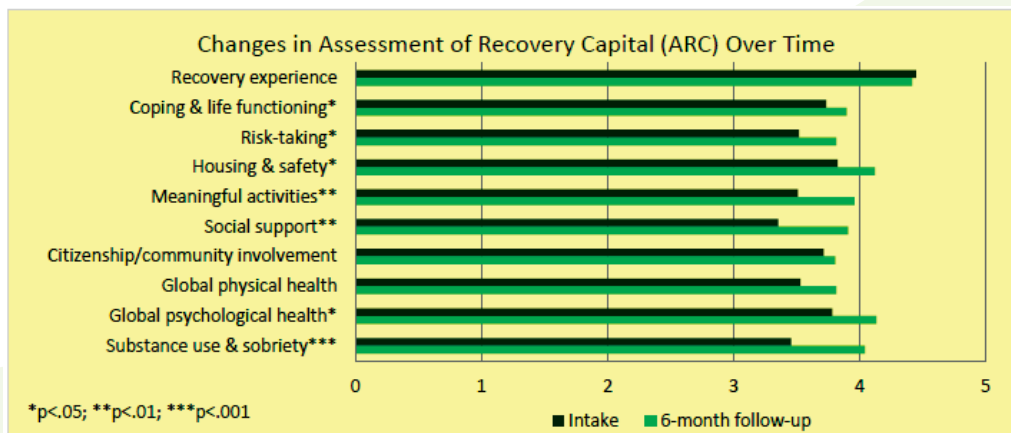
“My life was a constant battle of denial and deception. It all kept progressing until finally I had enough. Now I am able to complete the things I enjoy. Since my recovery, I am able to reconnect with friends and my partner of nine years. My family life has gotten better. I am able to rebuild my relationships with my grandmother. Our relationship is stronger now since my recovery. The center has opened my eyes to realize that life is valuable and precious. The employees at the center have given me confidence to complete my goals.”  
~ James, Newport

# Pathways to Recovery:

## Peer Supports for People in Recovery from Opiate Addiction

VRN's Pathways to Recovery project started as a three-year grant from SAMHSA to demonstrate that enhancing peer supports through Vermont's recovery centers would improve recovery outcomes for patients in medication-assisted treatment (MAT) undertaken as a part of Vermont's healthcare reform (via the Hub and Spoke system). The SAMHSA program ran from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016. Thanks to a one-time grant from the Vermont Department of Health, this vital program will continue through June 2017. We're confident the program's promising outcomes will help attract funding to continue these essential services.

Trained VRN staff called Pathway Guides, working out of several of the recovery centers, support people with opiate addictions who are in treatment and willing to explore a recovery process. Guides connect patients with ongoing recovery supports and assist them in adopting recovery lifestyles through conversations, coaching, facilitated recovery meetings, and introductions to new peers in recovery. We have demonstrated reductions in substance use and mental health symptoms, as well as increases in recovery capital, employment, monthly income, and stable housing.



The Assessment of Recovery Capital measures individuals' inner and outer resources that aid in successful recovery. The maximum score of each subscale is 5, and the maximum total score is 50. An ARC score of 27.5 predicts stable recovery. Significant increases occurred on 6 subscales and the total score.

### Positive Feedback from Provider Partners

At the end of the SAMHSA-funded program, the evaluation team from the Center for Behavioral Health Integration (C4BHI) conducted surveys with the MAT provider partners to assess the efficacy of the Pathways to Recovery project. C4BHI conducted qualitative interviews with six MAT clinics in five counties; 15 providers took part in the interviews. According to the report, "MAT providers overwhelmingly affirm that for them to proceed without the Pathway Guide support would be a hardship and affect the supports they're able to provide their clients."

"The lived experience is invaluable. There is an innate trust because he's been there. Only people in recovery can give that." ~ Provider

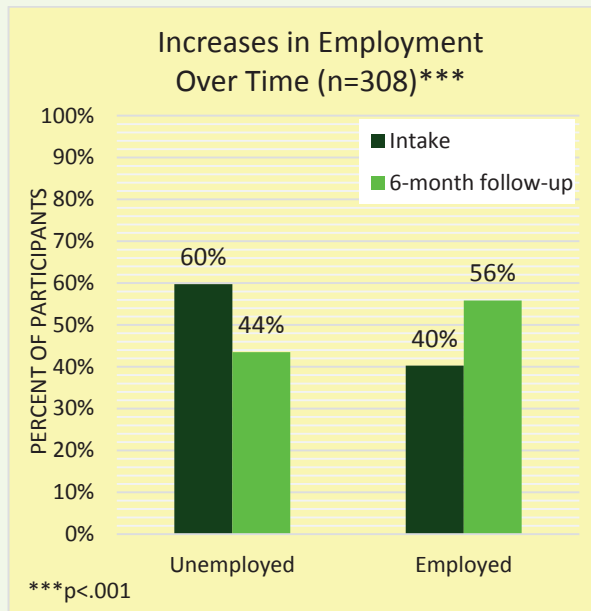
"In our minds, we know as Suboxone prescribers, people need a lot more hands-on recovery support than we could ever provide.... It's kind of like having a sponsor. It's an additional structure and support that they so need." ~ Provider

## Benefits of Having a Pathway Guide

- Having as a resource a peer who has gone through a similar experience.
- Having positive, safe, recreational places and people with whom to spend time.
- Having multiple places in which to learn recovery life skills.
- Being able to have separate resources available outside of traditional clinic hours.

Another provider shared that prior to connecting with the PG and their local Recovery Center, they had felt isolated as a provider. For them, *the work of the PG feels like a true collaboration and helps the providers feel as if they are a team and no longer doing the work alone.*

## Positive Changes in Employment and Housing



Type of Housing	Intake	Follow up
Own/Rent	51%	63%
Someone Else's Home	24%	20%
Halfway House	5%	3%
Residential Treatment/ Institution	4%	3%
Homeless/Shelter	9%	6%
Other	0.3%	1%
Missing	6%	4%
Total	100%	100%

## Other Promising Results

- *Overall abstinence:* 57% of individuals maintained or achieved complete abstinence 6 months after connecting with a Pathway Guide.
- *Abstinence from misuse of opiates:* 85% of individuals achieved or maintained abstinence from opiate misuse 6 months after being connected to a Pathway Guide.
- *Abstinence from alcohol:* 79% of individuals achieved or maintained abstinence from alcohol 6 months after being connected to a Pathway Guide.
- *Overall decrease in mental health symptoms:* The percentage of individuals reporting any mental health symptoms decreased over 6 months from 78% at the intake to 69%.

## Impact of Losing Pathway Guide Services

Providers were asked to share their perspective on the potential impact to their communities and their clients should Pathway Guide services be discontinued. They conveyed that these services and supports provide a much-needed complement to the existing continuum of care in supporting people on their journey through recovery.

“I have never seen this type of relationship with a treatment program anywhere and I really think this was a missing link.” ~ Provider



## Meet Our New Network Coordinator: Sarah Munro



The VRN is pleased to introduce our new Network Coordinator, Sarah Munro. As a leader in Vermont's peer-recovery system, Sarah represents the network centers in collaborations with our key partners, including the Department of Health and other state agencies, the Vermont Association for Mental Health and Addiction Recovery, and our legislators, in addition to our federal partners at SAMHSA. Sarah manages all aspects of running our nonprofit, writes and implements grants, engages in a participatory process with the nine member centers, participates in strategic planning, and represents the recovery system in statewide and federal conversations.

Sarah's most recent role was as Substance Abuse Prevention Consultant for the State of Vermont for the last 10 years. She worked with various coalitions and facilitated prevention partnerships. She's also a former Coordinator/Consultant for the Central VT Compassionate Community Collaborative, where she coordinated task forces around substance abuse, prevention, and recovery. Sarah was Executive Director for Friends of Recovery—Vermont, where she served as a grassroots community organizer. During her tenure at Friends of Recovery, she helped envision and establish a peer-recovery network in Vermont. She's come full circle!

Please welcome Sarah as she leads the Network into its second decade. Here's a "possibility proposition" Sarah wrote to describe a vision for our future:

"We continue to hold a vision of a rich and exciting network, full of possibilities, so attractive that new and seasoned people want to participate and join us because we are thriving. Word is getting out that we embrace all types of recovery, because we know all human beings who struggle with addiction deserve help. We are open to new ideas and people regularly share their hopes and dreams. We have expanded our creative opportunities to include some promising practices of using the arts to promote wellness. We expand the "writers for recovery" workshops and add new innovative options that originate from members for instance; "songwriters in recovery" and the "Artist Way" work groups. Our centers are ready to expand. We continue the strong mentoring system that has always occurred between centers because we are aware of how important sharing our collective wisdom is to our continued growth. On the national level we have risen to the top of excellence and other states are benefiting from our successes."

*The Vermont Recovery Network: Helping people who have experienced problems as a result of drugs and alcohol to find, maintain, and enhance their recovery through peer supports, sober recreation, and educational opportunities.*

**P.O. Box 244, Montpelier, VT 05601**  
**802.738.8998**  
**VTRRecoveryNetwork@gmail.com**  
**www.VTRRecoveryNetwork.org**



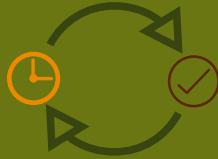
# RECOVERY WORKS



Last year, people made more than **170,000** visits to Recovery Centers across Vermont, with each Center averaging nearly **1,200** visits per month.



4 of 5 individuals surveyed achieved or maintained their recovery over time.



There is a significant correlation between the length of time people attend recovery centers and the length of time people are in recovery.

## DECREASED CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT



**5** out of **10** ceased criminal activity since coming to a Recovery Center.



**4** out of **10** never engaged in criminal activity.



**1** out of **10** never stopped engaging in criminal activity.



**90%** felt their overall health and wellness improved



**30%** decreased or quit smoking



**70%** reported improved family relationships

## STABLE HOUSING

Percentage of individuals who transitioned out of unstable living conditions into owning/renting their own housing. This is impressive given that affordable housing in Vermont can be challenging.



**6%**

## GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT



The number of individuals employed grew by **15%** over time.



## SPOTLIGHT: PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY

Pathways is a peer-recovery initiative for people recovering from opioid addiction. Pathway Guides work hand in hand with providers in the Hub and Spoke System.

**100%**

reported achieving or maintaining abstinence from opiates



reported achieving or maintaining abstinence from alcohol

**85%**



The proportion of individuals employed increased from **33%** to **65%**.



The proportion of individuals engaged in criminal activity decreased from **18%** to **10%**.

Individuals also experienced significantly fewer days of depression and anxiety.

[www.vtrecoverynetwork.org](http://www.vtrecoverynetwork.org)

# VOICES OF RECOVERY



**Before:** I was a functioning addict for six years, after a tragic miscarriage. I was a Girl Scout co-leader, soccer mom, school volunteer—and a small-time drug dealer. When I hit rock bottom, I was facing a felony domestic assault charge, eviction, traffic tickets piling up, and my teen daughter hated me. I lost my entire family. Finally, I spent a week planning my suicide. Then I spent two weeks in the psych ward before being referred to a rehab. I attended all three rehabs—Valley Vista, four days; Brattleboro Retreat, 12 days; Maple Leaf, 16 days. I spent the first five months clean living in my car.

**Today:** I now have three+ years clean, and my 19-year-old daughter is proud of me again. After two years clean, my mother began speaking to me. Within 11 months of sobriety, I had a home again for my daughter and me. I no longer live an illegal lifestyle, so I no longer receive traffic tickets or criminal charges. I've been in a relationship for over three years with the same person. I love my recovery and stay involved in our recovery community. I try to help other recovering addicts as much as possible. I've been coming to the Turning Point center and meetings since the beginning of my recovery journey. Our pathway guide has been an instrumental part of my recovery this past year. I look up to him as a mentor for many aspects of my life today, and feel extremely inspired by him!

~ Brandie, Turning Point Center of Central Vermont

**Before:** I was on a path of self-destruction, taking anything I could get. Drinking heavy and hurting everyone around me, trying to end my suffering.

**Now:** Since my accident, I've been able to clean myself up. I got out of jail, made parole, and found a job at Journey to Recovery where I help others to not follow my path. I have a roof over my head, good friends, and I'm working on paying off my fines and getting my life back. I couldn't ask for a better lifestyle that I'm finally part of!

Without the Recovery Center, I would be back hanging with the wrong people. It introduced me to my new friends and support team, people who are available to me 24/7 and I for them. It has given me a new life and a new family.

~ Michael, Journey to Recovery Center, Newport

**Before:** I was going to a counselor, who asked how it was going not drinking. "Fine, I haven't drank for years." So, AA is working well for you, she suggested. "No, I stopped going to AA meetings, but I'm not drinking." Then my wife said, "But now you're nasty and difficult." The therapist recommended that I go to the Brattleboro Turning Point recovery center. I had my regrets from the past, and I felt rotten about myself, with a lot of guilt and shame. I needed to forgive myself.

**Today:** Turning Point gave me the opportunity to give back, help others in recovery, and ... forgive myself. Turning Point also helps to prevent isolation. Before recovery, I was very critical of myself and used to isolate; I would drink alone. The center gives people the opportunity to socialize. People there give positive words of encouragement, strength, and hope, never mind that you laugh a lot. I've made many friends in recovery who come to the center and also go to AA meetings. I've since gone back to AA. Thanks to Turning Point, I have the opportunity to advance my education in addiction and alcoholism prevention. I have become a group facilitator in SMART recovery and a Recovery Coach. I had found a new tool for my "recovery toolbox." I'm a happy warrior against my alcohol addiction. I'm much happier now that I've bettered myself and am helping other people.

~ Andy, Turning Point of Windham County