

THE
University of Vermont
MEDICAL CENTER

April 16, 2018

The Honorable William Lippert, Chair
House Health Care Committee
Vermont House of Representatives
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Chair Lippert:

We are writing today in support of S.225, an act relating to pilot programs for coverage by commercial health insurers of costs associated with medication-assisted treatment.

Vermont has pioneered the Hub and Spoke treatment program for individuals experiencing substance use disorder and S.225 further supports this successful program. S.225 will allow for the careful planning necessary to integrate commercial (and other) payers into the initiative, which is currently funded solely by Vermont's Medicaid program. While the majority of the patients receiving care in Spokes are Medicaid beneficiaries, approximately 30% are not on Medicaid. Vermont's program providers have been treating all patients regardless of their insurance coverage, resulting in program deficits. This is not sustainable, as we have seen dramatic increases in the number of patients accessing treatment. We should be doing everything we can to encourage Vermonters to access this treatment, and S.225 will improve the sustainability of our programs.

The Community Health Improvement Department at the University of Vermont Medical Center operates the Chittenden County Spoke team, serving more than 600 Medicaid beneficiaries as well as over 300 people that are un insured or on BCBS, MVP, Cigna or Medicare. We work at over 10 sites in Chittenden County: Primary care, Ob/GYN., Lund Family Center Center for Pain Medicine as well as a bridge program at the Howard Center. We do this work with a team of 16 Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors and Registered Nurses. This ability to "wrap services" around these very complex patients is really the key to success in their recovery efforts.

We ask that you support S.225 as passed by the Senate and the House Human Services Committee. We are happy to testify before your committee, but understand that time is short. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Pam Farnham, RN
Manager, Community Health Teams



Jason W. Williams
Director, Government and Community Relations