



# Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council

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TESTIMONY: Access to Healthcare

PROVIDED BY: Kirsten Murphy, Executive Director, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council (VTDDC)

BACKGROUNDS: VTDDC is a public board charged under federal law with engaging in education and advocacy that advance the community inclusion, productivity, and self-determination of people with developmental disabilities

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Thank for the opportunity to share a few brief thoughts about barriers to healthcare faced by Vermonters with developmental disabilities.

Adults with I/DD are arguably the largest medically underserved subpopulation. They experiences marked disparities across a wide array of metrics, including health outcomes, health behaviors, satisfaction with healthcare encounters, and access to health services.

To share a just a few statistics, 71% of adults with I/DD over forty have two or more chronic conditions. They are six times more likely to be hospitalized than their peers. According the Special Olympics, which hosts the largest data base measuring the health status of adult with I/DD, out of ten athletes:

- ⇒ Six are clinically obese or overweight
- ⇒ Four have obvious tooth decay and one needs an urgent referral to a dentist.
- ⇒ Three fail a simple hearing test.
- ⇒ Four need glasses and two have active eye disease.

According to the Vermont Department of Health:

- ⇒ The rate of lung disease for Vermonters with disabilities is 28%, as opposed to 15% for the general population.
- ⇒ The rate of diabetes or prediabetes for Vermonters with disabilities is 25%, as opposed to 13% of the general population.
- ⇒ The rate of cardio vascular disease for Vermonters with disabilities is 16%, as opposed to 7% for the general population.

In 2015, the VTDDC published a white paper identifying factors that contribute these disparities. In the vast majority of cases, underlying disability is not considered a cause. Rather, adults with disabilities face numerous barriers to accessing healthcare. Primary care providers that see adults reported that they had had virtually no

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