

Memorandum

To: Senate Institutions
From: Ken Schatz, DCF Commissioner
Re: Woodside Rehabilitation Center
Date: February 8, 2018

The State of Vermont and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) worked out a plan to regain federal financing for Woodside. To do this, Woodside must first become certified as a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF). DCF is actively working to meet the criteria needed to receive this certification, and hopes to begin drawing down federal funding by July 1, 2018. CMS has specified that Woodside may keep its current admission policy of youth ages 10 to 18, but must allow youth who turn 18 while in the program the option to remain at Woodside for treatment as long as is medically necessary, but not past the age of 21. This requires a change in Vermont Statute, which DCF is pursuing during the 2018 session.

Woodside Background

Woodside is a 30-bed residential treatment facility serving youth ages 10 to 18 in the custody of the Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) with a delinquency charge or adjudication. Youth receiving treatment at Woodside cannot be safely treated in less restrictive settings. Woodside is operated by DCF's Family Services Division. Most youth receiving treatment at Woodside have exhibited aggressive and assaultive behaviors. The majority of youth in the program have traumatic abuse histories resulting in intensive clinical needs.

Consistent with the renovation feasibility study of Woodside submitted to the Vermont General Assembly in 2016 (http://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/files_WS_12.22.16_FeasibilityReport.pdf), AHS and BGS recommend replacing the Woodside facility. Replacement of the facility would allow the program to:

- serve youth in a more appropriate therapeutic setting consistent with the programming
- support Woodside's efforts to restore Medicaid funding for the program, which was lost in the fall of 2016
- allow Woodside to serve more youth than it currently does
- serve some youth in-state that are currently being served in out-of-state facilities

The feasibility report concluded that the Woodside facility was woefully inadequate to meet the needs of its therapeutic programming. The feasibility study highlights the fact that Woodside was originally constructed as a juvenile correctional facility which was repurposed as a treatment facility with a mission to heal youth, not in a jail, but in a secure, therapeutic environment that supports a return to society. The feasibility study also points out that the Woodside therapeutic model is better for youth, their families and society and is more cost effective than detention. Please see the detailed Feasibility Study of Woodside for structural considerations including Woodside being in the floodplain.

DCF's aim is to have the Woodside facility replaced on its current site as recommended in the feasibility study and to have this included in the 2020 capital appropriations bill. This will better ensure retention of the PRTF certification from CMS and the continuation of federal Medicaid funding for the treatment of these youth.

