



## Testimony to Senate Committee on Appropriations – April 6, 2017

### Molly Dugan, Director of SASH, Cathedral Square Corporation

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate the difficult budget situation our state again faces and the hard choices you must make. I would like to comment on the Governor's recommended budget supporting the SASH (Support and Services at Home) initiative, of which Cathedral Square serves as the statewide administrator.

#### **Support and Services at Home (SASH)**

The Governor has recommended level funding at \$974,023 to support SASH. This funding is essential to the continuation of this proven and impactful model. SASH is a care coordination program that utilizes the home as the ideal setting for the effective delivery of health and wellness supports for older adults and adults with disabilities. The SASH program, serving over 5,000 Vermonters, is operated out of affordable housing sites across the state – in housing owned by 22 nonprofit housing or public housing authority providers such as RuralEdge in Caledonia and Orleans Counties, Shires Housing, DownStreet and the Montpelier and Barre Housing Authorities, Cathedral Square working with Champlain Housing Trust and the Burlington and Winooski Housing Authorities, Lamoille Housing Partnership, and in Windsor County the Brattleboro Housing Partnerships works with the Windham and Windsor Housing Trust. SASH draws on the expertise of local home health, area agencies on aging, mental health agencies, hospitals and primary care providers to support high need individuals with a very efficient and flexible model of care.

**SASH will bring \$3.7 Million in new federal Medicare funds to Vermont this year.** These funds provide for wellness nurse and care coordinator positions in housing to support to the highest need individuals in our state- living in affordable housing buildings as well as single family homes in surrounding neighborhoods. SASH saves health care spending by its laser focus on keeping participants in our program well and healthy and being able to respond quickly and in the home if an unexpected health issue happens. We offer chronic disease self-management programs, Tai Chi for arthritis, diabetes prevention classes, walking programs and many, many other offerings at over 140 housing sites in communities all over the state.

**SASH has been rigorously evaluated** by the federal Agency of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The multi-year evaluation reports have found that SASH is resulting in lower overall Medicare spending and in post-acute Medicare spending. On average, participants in early panels are spending approximately \$1,500 per person per year less than control groups in New York and Vermont.

As you can see in the handout I provided, besides just saving money, SASH is having positive impacts on increased access to care and improved health. This is true results based accountability.



### **Vermont Housing & Conversation Board**

I also want to take a moment to talk about the importance of VHCB funding for our work. Cathedral Square owns or manages thirty affordable housing communities made possible in part with VHCB funding. This includes assisted living for Medicaid beneficiaries that may otherwise be in a nursing home at twice the cost to Medicaid.

Our newest affordable housing community benefiting from VHCB investment is Elm Place in Milton. This 30-unit senior community in Milton welcomed its first residents last month and is providing much needed affordable housing with SASH services to low income senior residents in the Milton area. This development is a smart growth site in the center of town, with access to public transportation and within walking distance to services including the UVM Medical Center next door. This building will be designed to Passive House standards, which is a super insulated building envelope which greatly reduces energy usage and costs. This will be the first Passive House multi-family building in Vermont.

Our aging demographic only underscores the need for more affordable housing communities like Elm Place in Milton. **We strongly support the Governor's \$35 million housing revenue bond proposal as well as his proposed \$1 million increase to VHCB to help fund it.** This kind of investment creates housing that is affordable, energy efficient and accessible, and it leverages millions of other public and private funds for the benefit of Vermonters. The \$35M bond is especially important because it helps us make significant headway on our large and well documented shortage of affordable housing over the next 2 – 3 years, including for seniors, the homeless and other vulnerable Vermonters, which will help reduce costs in the human services budget.

### **AHS Grant Reductions**

Lastly, I ask you to remove a provision in the House budget that would give the AHS Secretary discretionary authority to eliminate \$1.25M in unspecified grants to community partners, to be annualized to \$2.5M in FY 19. This jeopardizes not just SASH, but the many other valuable programs that provide essential services to vulnerable Vermonters through nonprofits. It also circumvents your thoughtful deliberations and legislative authority.

We are doing a lot that is right in Vermont. Thank you for considering level funding of SASH and further support for VHCB, programs that are having a real and lasting impact on Vermonters.

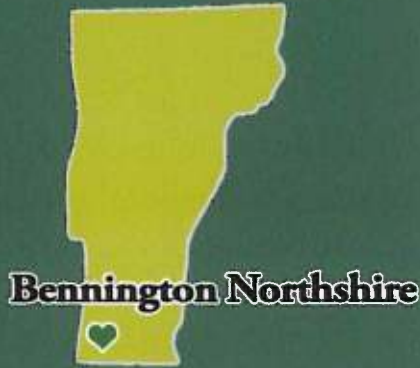
Thank you very much.

Molly Dugan  
SASH Director, Cathedral Square  
802.863.2224  
[dugan@cathedralsquare.org](mailto:dugan@cathedralsquare.org)



# SASH Panel Profile

## Bennington Northshire



### SASH Partners

Bayada

Manchester Health Services, Inc.

SASH Team Partners

Bennington Council on Aging

United Counseling Service

### Panel Age

2 1/2 Years

### Panel Size

86

Community Participants

### SASH Coordinator

**Susan Cottrell**

susan.cottrell@benningtonhousing.org

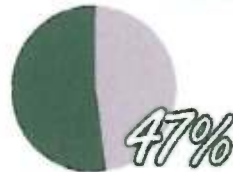
(802) 768-8729

### Wellness Nurse

**Randi Crofut**

randi.hansen10@gmail.com

## Proactive Measures



### Participants with Hypertension

#### Responsive Activities & Services

Regular Blood Pressure Clinics

Heart Healthy Presentations

Weekly Walking Programs

#### Services & Activities

Walking Group & Walker Walking Group

Meet at the Market (During the summer)

Blood Pressure readings by request

Case Manager referrals

Senior Food Drop deliveries

Monthly Wellness Event

Flu Shot Clinic in Manchester & Arlington

Monthly Foot Clinic



### Participants with Arthritis

#### Responsive Activities & Services

Weekly Walking Programs

Monthly Wellness Programs

#### Community Connections

Battenkill Valley Health Center

Bennington Council on Aging

Bennington Rescue Squad/Falls Prevention

Dr. Michl, MD

Green Mountain Express

Interfaith Council

Manchester Community Library

Manchester Health Center, Inc

Neighbor to Neighbor

Northshire Pharmacy

Riley Rink at Hunter Park

Shaws Market

Shires Housing Corporation

Southwest Vermont Medical Center

SYMC Northshire Campus

THM Property Management Service

United Counseling Service

Vermont Food Bank

## Accomplishments

All Northshire SASH participants live in their own homes in four rural towns. We have been successful in connecting many individuals with common interests or common health challenges. We have been able to get folks to church on Sundays, arrange for food deliveries to shut-ins on Senior Food Drop day and arrange for transportation to doctor appointments.

## SASH Success

Dawn was referred to SASH in March of 2014 by the case manager at one of our local PCP's. The Case Manager was concerned for Dawn as she suffered from colitis, anxiety, and depression which prevented her from leaving her home and properly shopping for food. At the time Dawn trusted no one and the Case Manager was her only social contact. Dawn needed a colonoscopy. SASH staff helped arrange doctor's visits, appointments and procedure dates over a two-year period, which Dawn routinely cancelled. Food deliveries were arranged from the local food bank and SASH sponsored Senior Food Drop. Countless efforts to get Dawn out of the house to attend SASH events failed until I asked Dawn if she would be willing to meet with another SASH participant who suffered from similar symptoms and eventually had a colostomy. Dawn agreed and the two were introduced in February of this year and hit it off immediately. They meet once a week to shop for groceries, drive to Dawn's medical appointments or just 'hang-out'. Dawn has also traveled to our office to meet with a Case Manager to fill out and submitted paperwork for Medicaid. It took two years, but The SASH team was able to make Dawn a social connection which has changed her life.



# BETTER CARE, HEALTHIER PEOPLE, SMARTER SPENDING

## HEALTH & WELL-BEING BEGIN AT HOME

SASH® uses the home as a platform to provide comprehensive care management and coordination. One of the country's best-known and widely cited housing-and-health models. SASH has been shown to improve population health, reduce costs and enable people to age in place safely and healthfully, helping participants avoid the distress and expense of unnecessary hospitalizations and premature transitions to long-term care facilities.

## HOW SASH WORKS

Affordable housing organizations throughout Vermont provide for a home-based SASH coordinator and a wellness nurse, who work with a team of social-service and health providers to help meet the individual goals set by each SASH participant.

SASH primarily serves Medicare recipients living in congregate housing and the surrounding community. It is available statewide, in every Vermont county, and currently serves approximately 5,000 people.

**Age range: 20–101 | Average age: 72**

SASH participants become part of a defined community focused on staying healthy at home.

Each participant has a SASH Coordinator who helps them identify their goals and facilitate access to health care programs and activities.

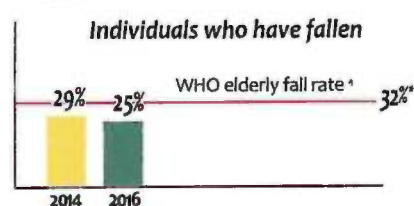
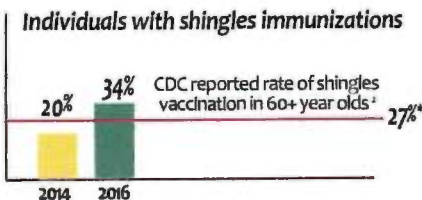
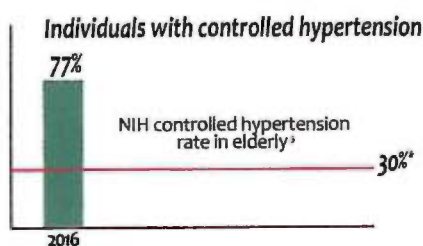
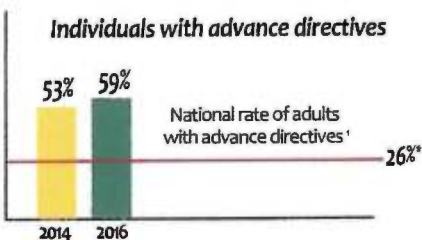


Each participant also has a Wellness Nurse who provides assessments and coaching, particularly with regard to chronic conditions.

Participants benefit from a collaboration of community partners who work together to support comprehensive community health.

## HEALTHIER PEOPLE

SASH has demonstrated consistent and significant improvements in quality metrics and in many cases exceeds national benchmarks.



## SMARTER SPENDING

SASH participants experienced a reduction in total average annual Medicare expenditure growth, **saving \$1,536 per beneficiary per year.**<sup>5</sup>

SASH participants with newly controlled hypertension thanks to self-monitoring and SASH support could potentially **avoid \$153,175 in costs.**<sup>6</sup>

The increase in SASH participants with advance directives could potentially **save \$1.575 million in costs for end-of-life care.**<sup>7</sup>

1) [http://www.cajpmonline.org/article/S0749-0797\(13\)00021-7#abstract](http://www.cajpmonline.org/article/S0749-0797(13)00021-7#abstract) 2) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4046467> 3) <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/ss6501a1.htm> 4) [http://www.honolulugingprojects/alls\\_prevention\\_ckeditor\\_ajzen](http://www.honolulugingprojects/alls_prevention_ckeditor_ajzen) 5) "Cost-Benefit Analysis of Home Blood Pressure Monitoring in Hypertension Diagnosis and Treatment: An Insurer Perspective," Alejandro Arrieta, John R. Woods, Nan Qiao, Stephen J. Jay 6) Support And Services at Home (SASH) Annual Report, 2nd Report, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation Office of Disability, Aging and Long-Term Care Policy 7) JAMA, 2011 Oct 5; 306(13):1447-53, doi: 10.1001/jama.2011.1410 Regional variation in the association between advance directives and end-of-life Medicare expenditures, Nicholas LHT, Langa KM, Washima TJ, Weir DR.

To learn more, visit:  
**sashvt.org**



# SASH Panel Profile Lamoille County



## SASH Partners

Central Vermont Council on Aging  
Community Health Services of  
Lamoille County  
Copley Hospital  
Downstreet in Barre  
Lamoille County Mental Health Services  
Lamoille Home Health Hospice  
Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP)  
The Manor nursing home  
Washington County Mental Health Services

**Panel Age**  
3 Years

**Panel Size**  
80  
Participants

**Including 54  
Community Participants**

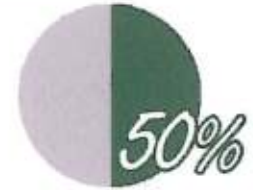
**SASH Coordinator**  
**Maxine Adams**  
ph 802.851.8348  
maxine@lamoillehousing.org

**Wellness Nurse**  
**Susan Wischart**  
swischart@lhha.org

## Proactive Measures



**Participants with Hypertension**  
**Responsive Activities & Services offered**  
Hypertension Initiatives, Monthly Blood Pressure Clinics,  
Blood Pressure Cuff Stations, and DASH Diet Counseling



**Participants with Arthritis**  
**Responsive Activities & Services offered**  
Bone Builders Classes & MOVE for Wellbeing

## Services & Activities

*Fall Prevention Workshops*

**Foot Clinics**

*Advance Directive Workshops*

*Bi-Monthly Newsletters*



**Hearing Clinics**

Chat & Fun Stuff

## Community Connections

Monthly Community Health Team  
(CHT) meetings

Bi-Weekly Learning Collaborative  
Case Management meetings



## Accomplishments

- SASH Volunteer Program in partnership with United Way and RSVP
- Community Building Workshops at housing sites in grant partnership with Home Share and Lamoille Housing Partnership
- Developed a chart for cataract patients and the SASH Coordinator to enlist friends that will remind and supervise Participant's prescribed eye drop regime when advised by physician

## Success Stories

**Grace**, a 71 year old participant on both Medicare and Medicaid with multiple chronic diseases and conditions, was overwhelmed with all her medications and physician visits. After working with Maxine, her SASH Coordinator, she reported, "SASH has helped smooth the way to a more positive relationship with doctors." Grace continues to live successfully in her own apartment and enjoys pursuing her religious writings.



81 year old SASH Participant, **Patricia**, was severely underweight and subject to falls. When she met Susan, her SASH Wellness Nurse, she could not hear or afford hearing aids. Susan helped her access dietary advice and encouraged her to visit her physician; who diagnosed Patricia's kidney cancer. Thankfully, her treatments were successful and she is now at a normal body weight. SASH also encouraged Patricia to communicate her financial struggles with her son; who was grateful for this information and purchased hearing aids for Patricia. Since working with SASH, Patricia has had no recent falls and is more socially engaged and back to working at her sewing hobby.