

# Office of the Health Care Advocate



Presented by

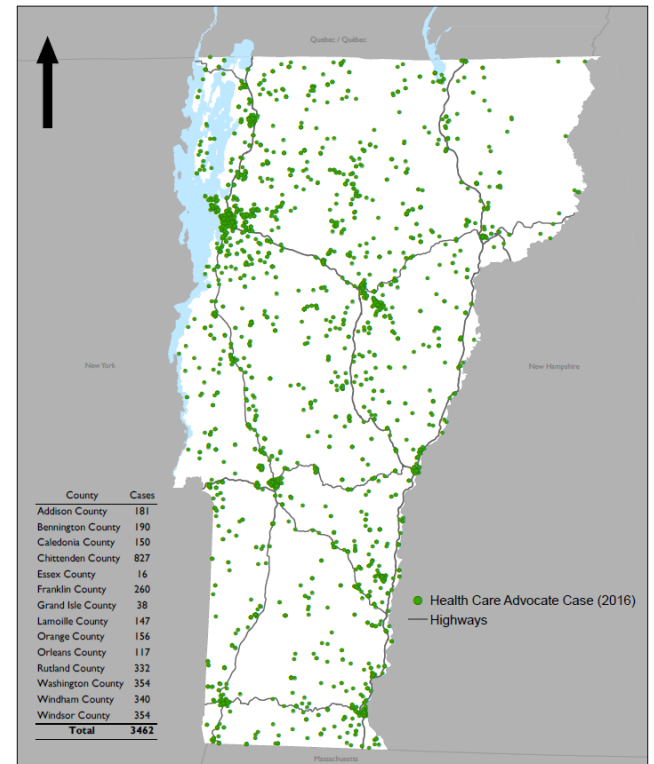
**Michael Fisher**  
**Chief Health Care Advocate**

2/21/18





- Who we are
- Help Line and Policy Advocacy
- S. 278 Regulation of Ambulatory Surgical Center Bill



# HCA Help Line

## Calls:

- 357 calls from 1/1/18 to 1/31/18
- 890 calls last quarter:
  - **19.55%** (174) about **Access to Care**
  - **13.26%** (118) about **Billing/Coverage**
  - **1.91%** (17) about **Buying Insurance**
  - **13.71%** (122) about **Consumer Education**
  - **29.78%** (265) about **Eligibility** for state and federal programs
  - **21.80%** (194) **Other**, including Medicare Part D, communication problems with providers or health benefit plans, access to medical records, changing providers or plans, confidentiality issues, complaints about insurance premium rates, etc.



# HCA Policy Advocacy

**CON** –The HCA participated in 11 certificate of need applications in recent years. We participated particularly heavily in the UVMMMC inpatient bed; Fox Run Eating Disorder Clinic; Copley construction of surgical suites; GMSC; and UVMMMC EPIC.

**Rate Review** – The HCA intervened in 56 cases since 2014. We submitted memoranda in almost all of those cases. There may be one or two where we didn't. I can't remember for sure. Of particular significance are the two full hearings for health insurance exchange filings each year.

**Hospital Budgets** – The HCA has actively participated in the hospital budget process for many years. Starting in 2016, our role expanded to having the opportunity to submit questions ahead of time and question the hospitals at the hearings.

## **The HCA is an independent consumer focused watchdog.**

- We are a small team and our work in each regulatory arena informs the others.
- In addition, the work of the advocacy team informs the work of the policy team.
- We do our best to bring the voice of every day Vermonters to the policy and regulatory tables.
- Due to the breadth of our work with Vermonters and with the health care system, we are well placed to be an independent consumer-focused watchdog.
- We take this role seriously. We evaluate each project carefully, look at the data, consider national information and weight the various perspectives as a key part of our decision making process.



# Additional Activities

- Outreach – Pharmacy and Targeted populations
- Web Page Triage  
[https://vtlawhelp.org/triage/vt\\_triage](https://vtlawhelp.org/triage/vt_triage)
- Hepatitis C Project
- Breast Cancer Screening Project
- Rules
- Affordability



# S. 278 Regulation of Ambulatory Surgical Centers

- **The HCA supports the concept of S.278.**
  - During GMSC CON application review we asked the Green Mountain Care Board to impose numerous conditions on the ASC, many of which were included in the issued CON.
  - We support regulation of ASCs including many of the provisions included in S. 278.
- **Finding the right level of oversight and financial contribution should to be considered.**
  - The size of the entity and the regulatory work load should be compared to other regulated health care entities.
- **Measures of quality are vitally important.**
  - The testimony of Elliott Fisher last week was very important.
  - The HCA has repeatedly suggested that providers be measured by a patient experience survey focused on shared decision making.

