

Theresa Utton-Jerman

Subject: FW: Public Testimony in support of Enhanced Pay for Vermont's High-tech Nurses

From: **Tom Schicker**
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Dear Representatives: We are the parents of one of the Vermont children currently deemed eligible for in-home nursing services through Medicaid. In addition, our 14 year old child has been part of the Pediatric Palliative Care Program since the inception of the pilot program 7 years ago. Despite the universal understanding that our child's needs are extensive and the burden placed on us as primary caregivers extreme, we have yet to receive adequate nursing support needed for our child's comfort and safety.

Despite our eligibility for help, there is currently in Vermont a 50% hi-tech nursing shortfall, and compensation for high-tech nurses runs on average \$10/hr less than that for hospital nurses. Consequently, we often struggle through long periods without care; currently we have not had a nurse in our home since June 2019. Our personal exhaustion leads us to plead the case for an enhanced pay rate for in-home high-tech nurses, potentially attracting more nurses into this area of care. We would also highly recommend that UVM Health Network Home Health and Hospice (formerly VNA of Chittenden county) NOT be the agency responsible for recruiting and providing in-home nursing; they have neither proved themselves reliable or committed to patient-centered care during our medical journey with our daughter.

We are going to present our story during a public hearing on this issue held at 6PM on Monday February 10, 2020 in Winooski, VT. We will also be submitting our testimony in writing. If you have any questions concerning the impact Vermont's crisis in high-tech nursing has had on our family, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We urge you very strongly to act in concrete ways to alleviate this very real problem.

Sincerely,

Tom Schicker and Kirsten Isgro
Burlington, VT 05401