



Upper Valley Haven

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To the members of the House Appropriations Committee, I bring greetings and appreciation from the directors, staff, clients and guests of the Upper Valley Haven. My name is Michael Redmond. I am the Executive Director of the Haven. While I am new to the Haven, it is not news to the members of this Committee that for 38 years the Haven has provided essential sources of support of transitional shelter, emergency shelter, food, and community supportive services to the most vulnerable people of the Upper Valley and surrounding communities. I very much appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of the goals of the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition to increase funding for proven programs that provide supportive services to the homeless, seniors and people with disabilities.

The Haven's doors are open every day to meet the needs of people without homes or places to sleep. While the Haven's programs are largely privately funded, grants from Vermont provide some key support to complement these funds. In the last full year of the **Housing Opportunity Grant Program**, we provided over 16,000 shelter bednights in our transitional shelters for nearly 200 families and adults. Of the 81 families and adults who exited our transitional shelters during the year, over 50% were able to transition to stable and permanent housing.

The **Family Support Program** we operate provides essential services of care management for people living in the community. At the end of the most recent quarter, 86% of 21 program families were stably housed and only 1 was homeless.

Every day in my job I see the need for all parts of the "three-legged stool" of housing investments: the bricks and mortar, the rental assistance, and the supportive services. Our data at the Haven show the outcomes are best for people who leave our shelters for good quality housing with subsidies for the rent, and close encouragement and available guidance from our service coordination team.

These programs, plus others the Haven operates, achieve the goals of helping people remain stably housed with reduced demands for public services. Increases in funding for supportive services will help more families to be stably housed for longer periods. Vermont has not been able to fully utilize available vouchers for rent support from the federal government because some local agencies are unable to provide the required match for case management which would be possible if funding for supportive services of case management was increased.

Thank you again for your service and your support of these essential programs. We recognize that the appropriations task is challenging due to the many demands for a limited pool of dollars. We support the investments in these programs because they do make a difference in people's lives. It is through the partnership of the Haven and other social service agencies with the State of Vermont that these programs offer a long-term solution that is sustainable over time.