

Hello, My name is Christine Hazzard and I am the Wellness and Supportive Services Manager at Brattleboro Housing Partnerships. As part of my job I coordinate services for sash and am the implementation manager for Windham and Windsor Counties.

I am speaking in response to the proposed budget reduction for SFY 2020 of funding through the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) for the statewide SASH administration. By decreasing funding for administrative guidance and support the foundation of the very successful and cost saving SASH program will be jeopardized.

In January of 2011 Brattleboro Housing Partnerships (BHP) became the Designated Regional Housing Organization (DRHO) for Windham and Windsor Counties. Since that time BHP has developed and implemented six SASH panels serving hundreds of participants in 25 towns. These programs have been extremely successful in supporting a very vulnerable population in meeting their personal wellness goals and in reducing medical costs. An independent, third party evaluation found statistically significant reductions in Medicare rates of spending growth for SASH participants when compared to control groups. Savings were estimated in the range of \$1,200 per person per year. (source: RTI, Final Evaluation Report, March 2017 prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, HHS).

Creating, implementing and managing a state-wide model takes a lot of time, energy, and collaboration. SASH is unique in that it offers a common base-line in which every panel offers uniform programming. The time that goes into systematic program implementation is substantial and includes staff training, model integrity, technical assistance support, data management and analysis, contract negotiations, and administration of \$3.8M in Medicare funding and HASS grants oversight. Brattleboro Housing Partnerships and Cathedral Square Corporation has supported this time even when the SASH grant did not cover all of the expenses.

Over the past eight years, thousands of affordable housing residents in Vermont have benefited from the SASH program. Most SASH participants are living in their final home. Many choose to age in place with the desire to stay in this home until the end of their life, others do not have an option of going anywhere else. SASH Coordinators get to know SASH participants over many years. They know their history, family, community, and values. This information is invaluable when supporting residents in setting their own life goals. The SASH model is implemented so seamlessly that many participants don't remember life without it. The seamless implementation is a product of the robust and deliberate administration of the grant. Without it the SASH program will cease to offer the same benefits and Vermonters will suffer.

As other states try to replicate the SASH model the State of Vermont should be celebrating the huge successes of a program that saves money and produces positive results instead of trying to dismantle it from within.