



# HCRS

HEALTH CARE & REHABILITATION SERVICES  
OF SOUTHEASTERN VERMONT

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Dear House Committee on Judiciary,

Thank you kindly for accepting this submission of public comment to the House Judiciary committee regarding policing in Vermont. My name is Kate Lamphere, LICSW and I am the Division Director for Adult Services at HCRS, a designated agency covering Windsor and Windham counties, and I also oversee the Police Social Work Program. HCRS has partnered with local and state law enforcement for longer than a decade providing embedded social work staff. HCRS partners with 9 police departments, including the Westminster Barracks of the Vermont State Police, providing embedded staff.

Embedding staff in the actual departments allows for teambuilding and trust to be established, which is essential to ensuring meaningful and effective responses. We have found that the most beneficial support that is offered, is follow up responses to calls that are mental health, substance use and/or social services related, this significantly reduces the number of repeated law enforcement responses to homes, and connects people to needed supports and services. Additionally, HCRS staff have expertise in mental health crisis response, and provide co-response with Law Enforcement to these emergency situations, reducing the likelihood that individuals will need inpatient psychiatric hospitalization or further law enforcement involvement.

The Designated Agencies are uniquely positioned with expertise and established community relationships, including with law enforcement, to embed highly trained staff in Vermont State Police barracks as a first step towards criminal justice reform, which will allow Vermonters to access critical mental health, substance use and other social services.

Currently, HCRS employs 5.5 full time employees, the primary funding comes from Act 79, and we also support the expenses with ADAP block grant funding and HRSA funding. With additional funding, HCRS could explore other creative options to support individuals in crisis including the use of peer support services for suicide prevention and crisis response, allowing the agency to further decrease our reliance on law enforcement for well person and mental health crisis responses.

Thank you for taking the time to hear this testimony.

Kate Lamphere, LICSW

## Departments supported by HCRS

Brattleboro Police Department

Windham County Sheriff

Dover Police Department

Wilmington Police Department

Bellows Falls Police Department

Springfield Police Department

Windsor Police Department

Hartford Police Department

Vermont State Police, Westminster Barracks

