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February 13th, 2020
Testimony/Comments on the Proposed State Budget
Vermont State
House Committee on Appropriation

Dear Rebecca,

My name is Amey Dettmer and I work for the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery. For many years, the state of Vermont has funded the Copeland Center's Vermont Recovery Education Project where the nationally and internationally recognized evidenced-based practice of the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) has been shared with behavioral health organizations throughout VT.

WRAP not only supports and promotes mental health recovery but is known to help people self-manage and navigate through many other life challenges such as; physical illness, diabetes, smoking cessation, overcoming substance addiction, community re-entry from correctional & prison facilities, whole health life wellness, becoming a parent and many more.

WRAP was born in Vermont in 1997. In its 23 years of existence, it has widespread across the globe and is implemented in many behavioral health systems throughout the USA. WRAP changes and saves people's lives. Research demonstrates that WRAP groups produce significantly positive outcomes for people trying to overcome severe mental health difficulties. It is a method of suicide prevention that saves people's lives through its profound impact.

As a top-level national WRAP trainer, I have heard the praise of WRAP from thousands of people who use it as a daily self-help tool and method of self-management. The WRAP group experience is an opportunity for mutual learning about self-care methods and allows people the space to open up safely about real, and difficult life situations. The WRAP group model creates an environment where personal empowerment, self-direction, and personal responsibility is encouraged and promoted. Many have reported that WRAP was the catalyst for moving their life into recovery and wellness.

As a Vermonter myself, I personally use WRAP in my own life, having been exposed to its benefits about 8 years ago. I went from being a person who was going down some really bad paths and struggling with my mental health day in and day out to a person who has been able to live a life of wellness, growth and resilience even through major life changes, experiences of suicidal ideation, and escaping domestic violence. I have been able to remain a productive member of society and consistently attending WRAP groups has given me the connection to people with experiences similar to my own. As a Vermonter living in a rural and isolated community, these opportunities are a key aspect to my wellness.

With the help of state funding, The Copeland Center has been able to train and provide technical assistance to hundreds of WRAP facilitators throughout Vermont. These facilitators are then able to offer evidenced-based WRAP groups to their communities.



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Roughly 60 thousand dollars annually has been given to the Copeland Center to provide training and technical assistance to organizations around the state to implement WRAP so that community members can benefit from this exceptional program.

I write this letter today to request a commitment to fund WRAP in Vermont for years to come so it can continue making a difference in so many lives. Additional considerations for providing more funding for WRAP are also welcomed, as this program has proved to be effective in lots of settings such as; in-patient psychiatric units, public schools, drop-in centers, community-based services, and even within prisons. I can foresee a future where thousands of Vermonters have access to WRAP and Vermont becomes a state with improved outcomes and healed communities.

Sincerely,

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