

**Testimony of Claire Kendall, Co-director, Family Center of Washington County  
On behalf of the Parent Child Center Network  
To Senate Health & Welfare Committee  
February 28, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Prevention bill that you are working on and thank you for doing the work to focus efforts upstream as we try to help families navigate the challenges they face.

I am here to support your bill and to offer a few suggestions. We support the creation of a special fund to target prevention efforts and the identification of specific revenue sources for this fund.

We also support the creation of the Substance Misuse Prevention Council.

- We would respectfully request that a representative of the Parent Child Center Network be on the Council, as we do focus on prevention services and are a key collaborative partner with many other organizations who also provide prevention services.
- We would also suggest that it would be important that the academic members of the Council be well-versed in both evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and service delivery, especially given the mention of both in Sec. 7 in (1).

We are unclear what “overseeing regional prevention networks and other initiatives throughout the State” means. Vermont already has different collaborative groups and organizations that offer prevention services. We are concerned about creating another level of network meetings that would be layered onto our work. We don’t necessarily oppose new networks but would want to further understand what it means and also ensure that funding for any administrative costs associated with participating in these networks is factored into the funding formula.

As for the new Director that is proposed in the bill, our recommendation would be to have this Council be overseen by the new Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development, which was a position created through a bill last year. We believe that taking a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to prevention will help with substance misuse issues as well as other potential risk factors for families. Having the Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development oversee this work would also help to coordinate the many efforts that are both prevention work and trauma-informed efforts across the state.

In the Duties Section (Sec. 7), we very much appreciate #1, but might suggest changing “develop corresponding evidence-based and evidence-informed programs to address unmet need” to “identify current programs that can be better funded to serve more people and/or develop....”

Similarly, on p8, (2)(B)(4), we suggest: identify current programs that can be utilized and/or develop

Starting on p9, (6)(A), we appreciate the inclusion of the Parent Child Centers. We would note that prevention is often broader than programs specifically focused on “substance misuse.” Parent Child Centers and other service providers have embraced the multi-generational, Strengthening Families Framework, which focuses on building protective factors. Building these protective factors is a proven prevention strategy for many risky behaviors, yet it may not be specifically identified as a “substance misuse prevention service.”

We would suggest that it may also be important to mention that the Council should work with and/or consider the trauma-informed work that is already being done across the state. Here again, we think having the Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development oversee the Council would help with this goal.

With regard to the Fund, again we believe it should be administered by the Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development. In addition, we respectfully recommend that the Council review the “allocation system” for the Fund and make recommendations for any changes to meet the goals outlined in the bill.