



February 8, 2022

*Community
Standards
Ethics
Education*

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Dear State Representatives,

Vermont experienced the highest percentage increase of any state in the U.S. in drug overdose deaths during the coronavirus pandemic, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nationwide, overdose deaths for the 12-month period ending in April 2021 were 27.2% higher than in the previous 12 months. In the same period, Vermont's overdose deaths went up by nearly 70%, from 123 deaths to 209! Generations of Vermonters have experienced addiction from alcohol to opioids. **For these reasons, I implore the legislature to support Governor Phil Scott's bold budget proposal that will invest \$4.5 million in resources to advance recovery supports for Vermonters in need.**

Expanded access to time sensitive residential treatment is a critical first step and proposed investment but recovery does not end after a short stay. A continuum of recovery services is needed that include housing options such as certified recovery residences, which the Governor seeks to expand access to through his proposed budget. Recovery residences offer an evidence-based approach that provides a homelike setting for individuals recovering from alcohol and substance use disorders by offering peer support; an environment that prohibits the use of alcohol, illegal use of prescription drugs or other illegal substances; assistance with support services and community resources; and is based on Social Model principles. This philosophy promotes norms that reinforce healthy living skills and associated values, attitudes, and connection with self and community for sustaining recovery. Participation in a recovery residence is voluntary and, in many cases, provides the individual with an opportunity to escape an environment that had fueled their addiction.

In treating this disease, we recognize that recurrence is a natural part of recovery. To this end, the Vermont Department of Health and the Agency for Health and Human Services should be applauded for their continued efforts to develop a stabilization system across Vermont that will help individuals in need of respite, treatment, and safe harbor during relapse. This critical system is long overdue and the Governor's budget provides funding to make it happen.

I would be happy to offer more information about recovery residences and how an enhanced system can help Vermonter's struggling with the challenges of addiction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey T. Moreau", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey T. Moreau, CFRE, MPA, CRC
Executive Director