

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Representative William Lippert, Jr., Chair, House Health Care; Representative Anne Donahue, Vice Chair, House Health Care, Representative Alice M. Emmons, Chair, House Committee on Corrections and Institutions

**FROM:** Sarah Squirrel, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health

**DATE:** March 18, 2021

**SUBJECT:** DMH Community Services Support

Please find below an overview of current and new federal resources that have been allocated and targeted to support Vermont’s community mental health system.

| <b>Funding Source</b>                      | <b>Purpose</b>  | <b>Spending timeframe</b> | <b>Amount</b> |
|--|---|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Mental Health Block Grant (Current)</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children’s services that enable community-based supports for children and youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) to remain in the community and public school.</li> <li>2. Respite funds to all 10 DAs- Services for families with a child or adolescent experiencing a severe emotional disturbance to avoid out-of-home placement. Respite offers short-term support and relief to families and includes funding for camps, lessons, groups, activity passes etc.</li> <li>3. Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) Grant to all 10 DAs, to increase the abilities of persons with long-term mental illness to function in community settings with the greatest possible independence from the mental health and human-services system by providing community-based treatment, rehabilitation, and support.</li> <li>4. CRT Grant - All 10 DAs - Co-Occurring Funding- To support the evidence-based practice of Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment (IDDT) for individuals with severe mental illness and substance-use disorders</li> <li>5. Emergency Services- To avoid unnecessary institutionalization of acutely mentally ill persons by providing immediate professional evaluation and treatment.</li> <li>6. Housing infrastructure funds for the Clara Martin Center- for a SharePoint license to manage coordinated entry for housing programs.</li> </ol> | Federal<br>FY21           | \$1.2M        |

| Funding Source  | Purpose  | Spending timeframe        | Amount |
|---|--|---------------------------|--------|
|   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Housing infrastructure funds to the Office of Economic Opportunity - Housing Opportunity Funds. Financial assistance to households with a member with a self-identified mental health condition, to assist with back rent, security deposits, or moving expenses to help maintain housing or assist in rapid rehousing.</li> <li>8. Street outreach – to Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS) to provide social-service intervention(s) citywide in Montpelier/Barre on police calls with social-service components. (an evidence-based practice - EBP Crisis Service)</li> <li>9. Church Street outreach - Howard Center Outreach to provide social-service intervention(s) citywide in Burlington for police calls with social-service components. (EBP Crisis Service)</li> <li>10. VT Psychiatric Survivors (VPS) - Operating Expenses- Support for activities of Vermont Psychiatric Survivors, a statewide consumer-run organization of consumers, survivors, and ex-patients with a multiplicity of activities and growing responsibilities.</li> <li>11. VT Support Line - Pathways- Warm line - a nonemergency telephone response line operated by trained peers for the purpose of active listening and assistance with problem-solving. Serves all of Vermont from two call centers in Burlington and Barre. (EBP Crisis Service)</li> <li>12. Suicide Prevention - Center for Health and Learning- support additional training and mentoring for programs implementing the Zero Suicide model. Programs implementing Zero Suicide will receive training and consultation on the Zero Suicide model and also on the Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) approach.</li> <li>13. Copeland Peer Supports for training in the Wellness, Recovery, Action Plan (WRAP®) framework (EBP Crisis Service)</li> <li>14. Psychiatric consultation available Statewide for any Primary Care Provider treating children who have psychiatric care needs</li> <li>15. Training and Technical Assistance related to anti-racism; anxiety in children/youth, peer supports; mental health training re: LGBTQ; microaggressions, Six Core Strategies to Reduce Seclusion and Restraint.</li> </ol> |                           |        |
| <b>Mental Health Block Grant-COVID Supplemental (NEW)</b> | <p>In development for submission to SAMHSA with the following guidance on funding guidelines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Operation of an “access line,” “crisis phone line,” or “warm lines” to address any mental health issues for individuals</li> <li>b. Training of staff and purchase of equipment that supports enhanced mental health crisis response and services.</li> <li>c. Mental Health Awareness training for first responders and others.</li> <li>d. Hiring outreach and peer support workers for regular check-ins for people with serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbance (SMI/SED).</li> </ol>  | Available through 3-14-23 | \$1.4M |

| Funding Source  | Purpose   | Spending timeframe                   | Amount      |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Prison and jail re-entry and enhanced discharge from inpatient settings in order to reduce risks of COVID-19 transmission.</li> <li>f. COVID-19 related expenses for those with SMI/SED, including testing and administering COVID vaccines, COVID awareness education, and purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).</li> </ul>   |                                      |             |
| <b>Mental Health Block Grant- American Rescue Act funds (NEW)</b> | All funds will be utilized to strengthen and expand Community Mental Health Programs and Services. DMH working with Designated Agencies, Special Services Agencies and Peer Providers to determine where and how funds should be utilized   | Available through 9-30-25            | \$2,782,996 |
| <b>SAMHSA COVID-Emergency Services Grant (NEW)</b>                | <p><b>Based on parameters and requirements of grant</b></p> <p><b>1. Expansion of Emergency Services</b><br/>To ensure we have the capacity to meet these needs we will use funds from the grant to increase the capacity of the emergency services system by purchasing technology for the staff to provide telehealth services 24/7, which will expand staffing to respond to the demand for mental health interventions for individuals with severe mental illness.</p> <p><b>2. Renovations to Existing Crisis Programs</b><br/>Funds for renovations to existing MH crisis programs to make space more accessible and private for clients to provide adequate social distancing and safety for both staff and clients.</p> <p><b>3. Mobile Crisis Vans</b><br/>Funds will be used to purchase vans for mobile crisis response to individuals in need. The vans will be large enough to comply with social distancing requirements while meeting with individuals who are in communities and/or homeless.</p> <p><b>4. Sensory Bags, PPE, Equipment</b><br/>Grant funds will be used to ensure staff at agencies have items such as sensory bags, cleaning agents and PPE to enable safe outreach to clients.</p> <p><b>5.MH Peer Support Services and Outreach</b><br/>MH peer-to-peer services are an important element of Vermont’s mental health system of care. Funds will be used for expansion and extension of these services to provide community support and outreach to vulnerable Vermonters.</p> | 4/15/2020-8/31/21 (extension likely) | \$1,073,253 |

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|--|---|-------------------------|---|
| <b>SAMHSA<br/>Emergency<br/>COVID-19<br/>Grant - 2021<br/>Supplement<br/>(NEW)</b> | This funding will continue the activities listed above from our initial grant. All funds are being granted to community mental health agencies and peer support agencies. | 2/01/2021-<br>5/31/2022 | \$2.8M with ADAP-DMH will likely get a little over half of this for the mh system |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |   |                         | <b>Approx.<br/>\$7.8M</b>   |