



formerly Vermont Protection & Advocacy
(800) 834-7890 (Toll Free)
(802) 229-1355 (Voice)
(802) 229-2603 (TTY)
(802) 229-1359 (Fax)

141 Main Street, Suite # 7, Montpelier, VT 05602

Date: February 26, 2021
To: House Committee on Health Care
From: Ed Paquin, Executive Director
In re: H.210

Dear Members of the Committee,

DRVT has reviewed H.210 and believes that it addresses an intractable issue which we witness in our casework as the P&A and Mental Health Care Ombudsman almost daily. Your findings are compelling, broad and on the mark. The actions that are laid out in H.210 are also broad and are extremely ambitious as is appropriate to the purpose of eliminating inequity in health care. A growing awareness needs to reach a tipping point for meaningful change to occur and the range of actions, from data collection to attention to social determinants of health to cultural competence in service delivery, could bring our system to such a point.

As advocates for people with disabilities who often work with clients attempting to get access to appropriate health care, or whose lives exhibit the negative effects of an unbalanced system, we are often discouraged by the effects this has not only on life expectancy, but on the personal dreams and ambitions that people daily forego. And in public forums we conduct we have heard over and over from people with psychiatric disabilities who delay or avoid seeking care, having had the experience of medical providers dismissing physical symptoms as psychological, to those patients' detriment.

DRVT appreciates the work of this Committee in taking a broad and serious approach to shaping our health care system to be one geared towards equity for all Vermonters. Thank you.