



March 9, 2021

House Corrections and Institutions Committee – Alice Emmons, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee – Mary Hooper, Chair  
House Health Care Committee – Bill Lippert, Chair  
Senate Health and Welfare Committee – Ginny Lyons, Chair

Sent via e-mail

**Re: UVMHC Support for DMH's Secure Residential Facility Proposal**

Honorable Chairs Emmons, Hooper, Lippert, and Lyons:

Thank you for your consideration of the Department of Mental Health's proposal for a new secure residential facility to replace the temporary Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence.

As you know, the Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence was built as a temporary facility with plans for a more permanent replacement. It has been almost 10 years since the facility was put into place. Vermont's failure to invest in a secure residential recovery facility has left its residents to live in a temporary trailer-like structure.

Lack of a permanent and adequate secure residential facility also contributes to long stays for patients in hospitals. In our 2017 study, [Inpatient Psychiatry Barrier Days Analysis](#), 45 patients stayed 981 days longer in the hospital than was necessary due to delays for placement in supervised living facility over a two and a half year period. Increasing the number of beds at the proposed secure residential facility will help ensure that more patients are receiving the right level of care instead of staying in the hospital due to lack of placement.

More resources need to go to mental health care services across the continuum. Failure to act now on a secure residential facility to serve the small number of individuals who do not need to be hospitalized but need transitional programming and are denied residency in other community programs will negatively impact Vermont's entire health care system and increase long stays in both hospital inpatient units and emergency departments. Please support the Department of Mental Health's proposal for a secure residential facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert Pierattini".

Robert Pierattini, M.D.  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Psychiatry