

From: "Tessler, Julie" <Julie@vermontcarepartners.org>

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Subject: Thank you

Thank you for the diligent and thoughtful work you led in House Health Care Committee on the one-time and FY22 budget requests. Vermont Care Partners greatly appreciates how much demand there is for limited resources and how difficult it is to prioritize populations and service needs. We are thrilled that the Appropriations Committee has incorporated your recommendation in the one-time funding bill and feel buoyed by your advocacy for our workforce in the FY22 budget.

We have just collected and compiled some new data that might be of interest to you. Our waitlist data shows that Vermonters in need are on hold - waiting for services due to inadequate staff resources. Because Agencies often triage people requesting services to the most appropriation services available, the data under-represents the unmet need. For example, individuals who request individual therapy sometimes begin by receiving group therapy. All agencies reported some individuals waiting for services, but not all agencies have waitlists for every services. Access to psychiatry, shared living providers and mental health residential supports stood out for the longest waits for access.

Our shared concern is that some of these Vermonter who can't gain immediate access to upstream services in the community end up going into crisis and requiring hospital emergency room and inpatient care. The dream of parity is still not within our grasp,

Here is systemwide data showing Vermonters are not able to get the care they need:

- 364 adults are waiting for mental health services for 30 - 90 days
- 451 children and youth are waiting for community-based services for 21- 120 days
- 130 students are waiting for services in school for 12 to 120 days
- 190 children and youth are waiting for mental health services 12 - 60 days
- 39 adults are waiting for residential mental health supports for 7 - 365 days
- 67 people with intellectual/developmental disabilities are waiting for access to shared living providers for 3 to 365 days

The toll the pandemic is taking on everyone is profoundly felt by our staff as they respond to others while managing their own experience of trauma. At this point we have 780 staff vacancies and know about staff who have not left yet but have plans to do so. Systemwide the staff vacancy rate is 15%. Here is data on how staff vacancies are distributed by service type:

Developmental Disability Services: 190

Mental Health Services: 519

Substance Use Disorder Services: 29
Other: 42
Total: 780

I wish the data painted a more positive picture, but I believe the work you are doing is going to make a difference.

*Thanks,
Julie*

Julie Tessler. Executive Director (she/her)

VT Council of Developmental & Mental Health Services/Vermont Care Partners