

Good morning,

I hope you are both doing well. I wanted to follow-up regarding where one-time funding could be utilized to strengthen the mental health system of care by prioritizing the following. Of course eligible use of CRF needs to be taken into consideration as well.

1. **Expansion and Strengthening of Peers Services – Peer Operated Community Centers/Peer Respite**

- a. A limited portion of the DMH SAMHSA Emergency Grant is allowed for peer services, we are utilizing this to support the Pathway's Warmline. One-time funding should be prioritized to support community-based peer services across the state specifically the expansion of peer respite capacity. DMH has received proposals from Vermont's Network of Peer Providers and could utilize funding to have a demonstration/pilot program in an identified region of the state.

2. **Comprehensive MH support for LGBTQ Youth**

- a. DMH has successfully utilized previous CRF Funding to work with Outright Vermont to support suicide prevention efforts for LGBTQ youth and general outreach and support. Given the current data Vermont needs a more comprehensive approach to supporting the mental health needs of LGBTQ youth, one-time funding should be prioritized to support this.
- In 2019, about 1 in 3 youth reported **feeling sad or hopeless**, compared to 1 in 4 in 2017
 - 2 in 5 (40%) female high school youth reported **feeling sad or hopeless** and 1 in 4 female high school youth reported **doing something to purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die**
 - These concerns are higher among students of color and LGBTQ youth:
 - Half of LGB youth did something to purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die and about 6 in 10 felt sad or hopeless
 - More than 6 in 10 transgender youth did something to purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die and almost 7 in 10 felt sad or hopeless
- o In 2019, 6.5% of youth reported they had **attempted suicide at least once** (compared to 5.4% 2017). These concerns are higher among female youth:
 - About 1 in 6 female youth **made a suicide plan** and about 1 in 12 attempted suicide at least once.

- These concerns are higher still among students of color and LGBTQ youth:
- Almost half of transgender youth made a suicide plan and about 1 in 3 attempted suicide at least once (note that the number of transgender students is low, but risk is high).
- about 1 in 3 LGB youth made a suicide plan; about 1 in 4 LG youth and 1 in 5 bisexual youth attempted suicide at least once

3. Housing

- a. One-time funds should be considered to expand access to housing, potentially to acquire and rehab housing or even start-up costs for people who needs housing. One time funding for this can become complicated given the need for sustained funding as well as ongoing services and support needs.

Thanks,
Sarah

Sarah Squirrell, MS
Commissioner, Department of Mental Health