

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity to read through this piece of legislation and comment. I did not see any specific reference to membership from Vermont's Recovery Centers. We have 12 recovery centers in Vermont and a recovery community in Johnson, VT: Jenna's Promise. Our organization, Recovery Partners of Vermont represents 10 recovery centers/communities including Jenna's House. I think it is important that 2 members of the Recovery Partners of Vermont be members of this oversight committee. I say 2 members because I think it is important to have representation from the northern and southern parts of the state. One could also make the distinction between a rural setting and a more urban setting. Our state's recovery centers have filled a huge gap in Vermont's System of Care for people who are new to recovery and are leaving treatment programs going back to their community. All staff of the recovery centers are people in recovery themselves or family members. They see first hand how challenging it is to gain recovery after years of active addiction and work day and night to support people through those early months in recovery. It is a huge and challenging assignment. They do this work because they want to support their fellow Vermonter having been there themselves at one time. The work in Newport (Journey to Recovery, Inc.) is very different then the work in Rutland (Turning Point Center of Rutland). The standards are the same but the day to work with individuals is unique to the setting.

Much of the language I saw in the draft legislation mentions recovery services then it drifts to recovery housing or other services that do not specifically address the work being done by Vermont's recovery centers. For example, 2.D) on page 9. If you look closely, recovery services drift to recovery housing. There are many such examples throughout the legislation. I could not find any place where there was specific attention to the recovery centers. It would be an absolute miscarriage of justice and fairness if the recovery centers themselves did not have a say in how the opioid settlement funds were distributed. Too many times there have been promises that new funds would go to shore up the work of recovery centers only to find that the funds ended up somewhere else. Please understand they do this work with few if any benefits at this time. No health or dental insurance, no retirement funds, no EAP program. And wages are not competitive with other sister agencies in the community. thus they end up being a training ground for other providers! 2 representatives from our membership would help prevent yet another situation where the train of opportunity leaves the station and the recovery centers go about their business with empty promises of a better day."

Gary De Carolis, Executive Director

Recovery Partners of Vermont

P.O. Box 3042

Burlington, VT 05408-3042

802-310-5255

