



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

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

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Ed Paquin

SUPERVISING ATTORNEY

A.J. Ruben

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Zach Hozid

INTAKE SPECIALIST/PARALEGAL

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*DRVT is the **Protection & Advocacy System** for Vermont and our state's **Mental Health Care Ombudsman***

Welcome to Disability Rights Vermont

Disability Rights Vermont (DRVT) is a private, non-profit, statewide agency dedicated to advancing the rights of people with disabilities and mental health issues. Our purpose is to promote equality, dignity and self-determination of people with disabilities.

We support human and civil rights by investigating:

- complaints of abuse and neglect (physical or sexual assault, verbal & physical abuse, restraint and seclusion, forced treatment, and harassment.)
- complaints of violations of individual rights (the right to refuse treatment, right to privacy, right to receive services in the least restrictive environment, access to medical records, confidentiality, discrimination, etc.)

DRVT is part of the National Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system and a member of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN). This national system was created by Congress in response to concerns that States were not doing enough to protect people with disabilities against abuse, neglect, and serious rights violations. The P&A system increases scrutiny and available resources in order to improve conditions for people with disabilities. Each state has a P&A system. DRVT is designated by the Governor to be Vermont's P&A system. We are separate and independent from all state agencies, hospitals, and community mental health centers.

Disability Rights Vermont works towards a system that honors the dignity and needs of all people with disabilities.

DRVT provides information, referral and advocacy services, including legal representation when appropriate, to individuals with disabilities throughout Vermont. DRVT also advocates to promote positive systemic responses to issues affecting people with disabilities.

All communication with us is confidential.

Defending and Advancing the rights of people with disabilities.

Email at info@DisabilityRightsVT.org

On the web: www.disabilityrightsvt.org

DRVT Services

Below is a list of services that DRVT routinely provides to people receiving services in hospitals and other facilities such as residential care homes or prisons, and to people with disabilities in the community. This list is not exhaustive and only represents common issues that we encounter. DRVT promotes self-advocacy as an initial step. Decisions on the issues that we may assist with are determined on a case-by-case basis. If you ever have questions about a service that we might offer, please contact us.

- Investigate complaints of abuse, neglect, serious rights violations, and discrimination both in and out of the hospital
- Investigate complaints about Emergency Involuntary Procedures resulting in injury
- Investigate complaints of abuse or neglect in the Department of Corrections including but not limited to uses or force, unnecessary or excessive isolation, and inadequate medical care
- Assist with and review hospital grievances and appeals
- Assist with discharge planning for individuals that are deemed clinically ready for discharge or who are likely to experience barriers to a timely discharge
- Assist with Advance Directives for Health Care
- Assist with access to voting and other voters rights issues, including voter registration, requests for absentee ballots, and accessible polling places
- Assist victims of crimes with: making reports to law enforcement; legal representation in the criminal case to protect their rights as victims; obtaining relief from abuse orders; and safety planning
- Assist people receiving Social Security Administration benefits experiencing barriers to employment (individuals can be already employed, seeking employment, or pursuing secondary education). Note that barriers to employment is interpreted broadly
- Assist people receiving Social Security Administration benefits with representative payee issues or concerns
- Assist people with disabilities experiencing employment or housing discrimination or needing reasonable accommodations for housing or employment
- Provide education to patients, consumers, service providers, and the general public about disability rights and individual rights as a person with mental illness in Vermont
- Assist individuals whose disabilities affect their ability to communicate in court, administrative proceedings and/or state agency meetings (to request this service, please contact DRVT's Vermont Communication Support Project directly at 1-888-686-8277 or email csp@disabilityrightsvt.org)

For more information please contact us at 1-800-834-7890

or by email at: info@disabilityrightsvt.org

or write to us by mail at: 141 Main St. Ste.7, Montpelier, VT 05602

or visit our website at: www.disabilityrightsvt.org

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