

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Jane Kitchel, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations

FROM: Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health
Laurel Omland, Director of Child, Adolescent & Family Unit,
Department of Mental Health

DATE: February 15, 2022

SUBJECT: FY23 Budget – HRSA Grant follow up from 2/10/22 testimony

This memo is in response to questions raised during testimony on February 10, 2022 regarding the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA) grant.

The State of Vermont was awarded a \$2.2 million federally-funded grant for a 5-year project from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) entitled “Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA)– New Area Expansion.” Through these PMHCA funding opportunities, HRSA seeks to build primary care providers’ confidence, competence, and capacity to help children and youth with mental health conditions. The purpose of this program is to promote mental health integration into pediatric primary care by supporting pediatric mental health care *telehealth access programs*. New awardees, such as VT, will provide tele-consultation, training/education, technical assistance, and resource referrals for pediatric primary care providers to diagnose, treat, and refer children with mental health conditions.

While DMH is lead, the success of this project will be accomplished through collaboration and partnership with a number of other organizations across state government, university and health care providers, and advocates. The majority of HRSA funds are going to the Community Health Center of Burlington (CHCB) to start a Child Psychiatry Access Program to provide consultation via telehealth to pediatric primary care practices around Vermont to support their care of children and youth with mental health needs. Other project partners include the UVM Vermont Child Health Improvement Project (VCHIP), VDH Maternal Child Health Division, and evaluation with the Center for Behavioral Health Integration as identified through the state RFP process.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is in the development phase of this project and currently working to formalize an advisory group for the grant. DMH would like to utilize the strong linkage between the HRSA PMHCA work and the Mental Health Integration Council (MHIC) Pediatric Workgroup. The MHIC Pediatric Workgroup is comprised of HRSA project representation from DMH, Vermont Department of Health - Maternal Child Health Division, VCHIP, as well as a representative from Blueprint. Our goal with the HRSA project is to collaborate with and compliment other parts of our system, not function as a stand-alone project.

All project goals are detailed at HRSA’s [PMHCA site](#), and additional coordination and methodologies at [Vermont's project site](#).