

1 H.240

2 Introduced by Representatives Bos-Lun of Westminster, Brumsted of
3 Shelburne, Cina of Burlington, Dodge of Essex, Garofano of
4 Essex, Headrick of Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, McGill of
5 Bridport, Nicoll of Ludlow, Nugent of South Burlington, Pajala
6 of Londonderry, Priestley of Bradford, Templeman of
7 Brownington, Torre of Moretown, and White of Bethel

8 Referred to Committee on

9 Date:

10 Subject: Health; mental health; crisis diversion; peer respite facility

11 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish a
12 residential peer respite facility that provides support and services to individuals
13 experiencing a mental health crisis.

14 An act relating to establishing a residential peer respite facility in southern
15 Vermont

16 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

17 Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

18 It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

19 (1) by increasing the 256 psychiatric residential beds that the

20 Department of Mental Health currently oversees or contracts to augment the

1 number of short-term peer respite beds from two to four, more individuals in
2 crisis will be successfully diverted from inpatient psychiatric settings;

3 (2) by providing adequate residential alternatives to hospitalization for
4 individuals in mental health crisis, Vermonters will have greater access to
5 residential support and various therapeutic options during mental health crisis;

6 (3) by expanding peer-supported programming, individuals in mental
7 health crisis seeking an alternative to hospitalization receive effective,
8 compassionate, and affordable care;

9 (4) the State and those individuals seeking support during a mental
10 health crisis may avoid incurring expensive hospitalization costs; and

11 (5) by providing more residential beds for short to medium-term stays,
12 individuals in mental health crisis will have fewer long-term stays in Vermont
13 hospital emergency departments.

14 Sec. 2. RESIDENTIAL PEER RESPITE FACILITY

15 (a) The Department of Mental Health shall issue a request for proposals to
16 establish a two-bed residential peer respite facility in southern Vermont based
17 on an existing model that provides supports and services to individuals
18 experiencing a mental health crisis.

19 (b) A successful applicant shall ensure that:

20 (1) at least one bed in the facility may be reserved for stays of up to four
21 weeks; and

1 (2) the remaining bed is reserved for short-term residential stays of up to
2 two weeks.

3 (c) On or before January 1, 2024, the Department shall contract with an
4 eligible applicant to establish and operate a residential peer respite facility in
5 accordance with this section.

6 Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION; RESIDENTIAL PEER RESPITE FACILITY

7 In fiscal year 2024, \$515,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to
8 the Department of Mental Health for the purpose of contracting with an entity
9 to establish and operate a residential peer respite facility pursuant to Sec. 2
10 (residential peer respite facility) of this act.

11 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

12 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.