

## Testimony FY24 Budget

My name is Tracie Hauck. I'm the Executive Director of the Turning Point Center of Rutland and live in Rutland City. Our recovery center is a member of Recovery Partners of VT.

I am testifying today in support of an increase of \$1.85 million in base funding for the 13 community recovery organizations across the state, and an increase of \$1 million in base funding for recovery residences.

In the 8 years since I started my position, the needs of Rutland County residents for substance use services has grown far beyond our capacity to serve our own communities. The pandemic had a major impact on those needs, with the social isolation and closure of our center undermining the successful recovery of many and leading to a spike in deaths due to overdose.

Our peer recovery coaches work directly with community partners such as the hospital Emergency Department, Correctional facilities, Law Enforcement, Treatment and Rehab programs, a local university, and recovery residences. We are being asked to build new relationships with schools, churches and EMS as well, in an effort to reach those most in need.

Unfortunately, the requests we receive for recovery coaching and community presentations and trainings far exceed our current capacity to meet those needs, due to insufficient funding. Our need to fully support our current staffing and also onboard and train new coaches requires many hours of training and supervision, again, which requires funding. Currently our peer coaches, all of them people in recovery themselves, are not paid a competitive wage and receive NO benefits. Many of our coaches have National Certification, requires mandatory CEU's to maintain certification every two years. The proposed increase of \$1.85 million in base funding is profoundly needed by our centers to continue to provide high quality programs that not only support long term recovery for Vermonters but help prevent death by overdose.

Thank you for your consideration.