

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Health and Welfare to which was referred House Bill  
3 No. 222 entitled “An act relating to reducing overdoses” respectfully reports  
4 that it has considered the same and recommends that the Senate propose to the  
5 House that the bill be amended as follows:

6 First: In Sec. 2, regional stakeholder meetings; public needle and syringe  
7 disposal programs, in subsection (a), in the first sentence, by striking out  
8 “Health’s Accountable Communities for”

9 Second: By striking out Sec. 3a, 33 V.S.A. § 2004, in its entirety and  
10 inserting in lieu thereof the following:

11 Sec. 3a. [Deleted.]

12 Third: In Sec. 6b, 18 V.S.A. § 4752, in subsection (e), after “Department of  
13 Vermont Health Access”, by inserting the phrase or the Department’s  
14 pharmacy benefits manager

15 Fourth: By striking out Sec. 8b, rulemaking; prior authorization;  
16 buprenorphine in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 8b to read  
17 as follows:

18 Sec. 8b. RULEMAKING; PRIOR AUTHORIZATION; BUPRENORPHINE

19 The Department of Vermont Health Access shall amend its rules pursuant to  
20 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to enable health care providers in office-based opioid-  
21 treatment programs to prescribe 24 milligrams or less of the preferred

1 medication for buprenorphine without prior authorization in accordance with  
2 33 V.S.A. § 19011.

3 Fifth: In Sec. 9, 24 V.S.A. § 4412, in subdivision (1)(G)(i), by striking out  
4 the word “tenants” and inserting in lieu thereof the phrase persons in recovery

5 Sixth: By inserting a new reader assistance heading and Secs. 11 and 12  
6 after Sec. 10 to read as follows:

7 \* \* \* Drug Checking for Contamination Detection \* \* \*

8 Sec. 11. 18 V.S.A. § 4201 is amended to read:

9 § 4201. DEFINITIONS

10 As used in this chapter, ~~unless the context otherwise requires:~~

11 \* \* \*

12 (45) “Drug-checking” means the testing of a substance to determine its  
13 chemical composition or assist in determining whether the substance contains  
14 contaminants, toxic substances, or hazardous compounds.

15 Sec. 12. 18 V.S.A. § 4240a is added to read:

16 § 4240a. OVERDOSE PREVENTION; DRUG-CHECKING FOR  
17 CONTAMINANT DETECTION

18 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, it shall not be a violation of  
19 this chapter to receive, possess, transport, or store samples of a substance that  
20 may contain a regulated drug solely for purposes of analyzing the substance to

1 determine its chemical composition and disseminate information regarding the  
2 analysis to the provider of the substance.

3 (b) On-site community drug-checking service providers shall be permitted  
4 to:

5 (1) collect voluntarily provided residual samples of substances  
6 potentially containing regulated drugs, possess, transport, or store samples of a  
7 regulated drug solely for purposes of analyzing the substances to determine its  
8 chemical composition as a lifesaving intervention;

9 (2) use any available technologies to analyze the contents of samples to  
10 obtain timely, highly accurate information regarding the composition of drugs  
11 to prevent overdose and mitigate health risks;

12 (3) provide results of analysis obtained from drug-checking technology  
13 to the person requesting drug services;

14 (4) disseminate data containing only the results of analysis and  
15 containing no personally identifiable information to community members at  
16 risk of overdose; and

17 (5) if necessary, arrange for a sample of a drug or substance to be tested  
18 by an approved laboratory.

19 (c) In operating any drug-checking service, no personally identifiable  
20 information shall be collected from a person providing a controlled substance  
21 to a service provider.

1        (d) An employee, contractor, volunteer, or other person acting in the good  
2        faith provision of drug-checking services authorized by the Department, acting  
3        in accordance with established protocols, shall not:

4                (1) be subject to arrest, charge, or prosecution for a violation pursuant to  
5        this chapter, including for attempting to, aiding and abetting in, or conspiracy  
6        to commit a violation of this chapter;

7                (2) have their property subject to forfeiture, any civil or administrative  
8        penalty, or liability of any kind, including disciplinary action by a professional  
9        licensing board, credentialing restrictions, contractual or civil liability, or  
10       medical staff or other employment action; or

11               (3) be denied any right or privilege for actions, conduct, or omissions  
12       relating to the operation of a drug-checking service in compliance with this  
13       chapter and any rules adopted pursuant to this chapter.

14        (e) An individual possessing a regulated substance and who provides any  
15        portion of the substance to a program pursuant to this section for purposes of  
16        obtaining drug-checking services shall not be subject to arrest, charge, or  
17        prosecution for possession of a regulated substance pursuant to this chapter or  
18        civil or administrative penalty or disciplinary action by a professional licensing  
19        board for a violation of this chapter.

1       (f) Local governments shall not collect, maintain, use, or disclose any  
2       personal information relating to an individual from whom local government  
3       receives any drug or substance for checking or disposal.

4       (g) The result of a test carried out by an authorized drug-checking service  
5       provider shall not be admissible as evidence in any criminal or civil  
6       proceeding.

7       (h)(1) The Department of Health shall publish guidance and provide  
8       technical assistance for any service provider choosing to implement drug-  
9       checking services under this section.

10       (2) The Department shall coordinate the collection and dissemination of  
11       deidentified data related to drug-checking services to inform prevention and  
12       public health initiatives.

13       Seventh: By inserting a new reader assistance heading and Secs. 13 and 14  
14       after the newly added Sec. 12 to read as follows:

15                   \* \* \* Opioid Abatement Special Fund \* \* \*

16       Sec. 13. 18 V.S.A. § 4774 is amended to read:

17       § 4774. OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

18       (a)(1) There is created the Opioid Abatement Special Fund, a special fund  
19       established and managed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5 and  
20       administered by the Department of Health. The Opioid Abatement Special  
21       Fund shall consist of all abatement account fund monies disbursed to the

1 Department from the national abatement account fund, the national opioid  
2 abatement trust, the supplemental opioid abatement fund, or any other  
3 settlement funds that must be utilized exclusively for opioid prevention,  
4 intervention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction services.

5 (2) The Department shall ~~include~~ submit a spending plan to the General  
6 Assembly, informed by the recommendations of the Opioid Settlement  
7 Advisory Committee established pursuant to section 4772 of this subchapter,  
8 ~~as part of its annual budget submission~~, and once funding is approved  
9 appropriated by the General Assembly from the Opioid Abatement Special  
10 Fund, the Department shall request to have the funds formally released from  
11 the national abatement account fund, the national opioid abatement trust, the  
12 supplemental opioid abatement fund, or any other settlement funds that must  
13 be utilized exclusively for opioid prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery,  
14 and harm reduction services. The Department shall disburse monies from the  
15 Opioid Abatement Special Fund pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 3.

16 \* \* \*

17 Sec. 14. APPROPRIATION; OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

18 In fiscal year 2023, the following monies shall be appropriated from the  
19 Opioid Abatement Special Fund pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4774:

20 (1) \$1,980,000.00 for the expansion of naloxone distribution efforts,  
21 including establishing harm reduction vending machines, home delivery and

1 mail order options, and expanding the harm reduction pack and leave behind  
2 kit programs;

3 (2)(A) \$2,000,000.00 divided equally between four opioid treatment  
4 programs to cover costs associated with partnering with other health care  
5 providers to expand satellite locations for the dosing of medications, including  
6 costs associated with the satellite locations' physical facilities, staff time at the  
7 satellite locations, and staff time at opioid treatment programs to prepare  
8 medications and coordinate with satellite locations;

9 (B) the satellite locations established pursuant to this subdivision (2)  
10 shall be located in Addison County, eastern Vermont between the Northeast  
11 Kingdom and Brattleboro, Chittenden County, and a facility operated by the  
12 Department of Corrections;

13 (3) \$1,976,000.00 to fund 26 outreach or case management staff  
14 positions within the preferred provider network and within syringe service  
15 organizations for the provision of services that increase motivation of and  
16 engagement with individuals with substance use disorder in settings such as  
17 police barracks, shelters, social service organizations, and elsewhere in the  
18 community;

19 (4) \$240,000.00 divided equally among the State's four syringe service  
20 providers to provide overdose prevention services and response education and

1 resources that build trust between individuals with substance use disorder and  
2 Vermont’s system of care;

3 (5) \$840,000.00 to provide contingency management services to  
4 individuals with substance use disorder;

5 (6) \$100,000.00 to implement a wound care telehealth consultation pilot  
6 program for the purpose of utilizing wound care experts to provide telehealth  
7 drop-in appointments to address syringe use by individuals with opioid use  
8 disorder;

9 (7) \$200,000.00 to expand the distribution of fentanyl test strips and, if  
10 available, xylazine test strips; and

11 (8)(A) \$700,000.00 to the Department of Health’s Division of Substance  
12 Use Programs to award one or more grants to an organization or organizations  
13 providing or preparing to implement drug-checking services with spectroscopy  
14 devices, including high-pressure mass spectrometer (HPMS) or Fourier-  
15 transform infrared spectroscopy device (FTIR), in a harm reduction setting;

16 (B) the grants awarded pursuant to this subdivision (8) shall be based  
17 on an applicant’s ability to provide publicly available drug-checking services.

18 and by renumbering the remaining section to be numerically correct.

19 Eighth: In the newly renumbered Sec. 15, effective dates, before the period,  
20 by inserting and Sec. 8b (rulemaking; prior authorization; buprenorphine) shall  
21 take effect on January 1, 2024



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4 (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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\_\_\_\_\_

6

Senator \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE