

February 28, 2024 - Testimony on behalf of the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences and Recovery Partners of Vermont

Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences:

The mission of the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences (VTARR) is to support those in recovery from substance use disorders by improving access to recovery residences through established standards, a fair and transparent certification process, community engagement, education, technical assistance, research, and advocacy.

Executive Director Background:

Jeff Moreau serves as the Founding Executive Director of VTARR. In addition to his role at VTARR, Jeff is a surveyor and consultant with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), an international accreditation body for health-related organizations. His nearly two decade involvement with CARF allows him to stay abreast of best practices in behavioral health programs and substance use disorder treatment.

As a Certified Fundraising Executive with an educational background in public administration at the graduate level, Jeff brings a wealth of experience spanning more than 30 years in leadership positions within non-profit organizations. He has a proven track record of successfully developing resources and ensuring the delivery of high-quality services.

His dedication to the mission of VTARR and commitment to improving the lives of those in recovery exemplify his valuable contributions to the field of addiction recovery and rehabilitation.

Prior to Jeff taking on this role in 2019, there was no formal oversight of recovery residences in Vermont.

S. 186 Recommendations:

1. For Vermont to achieve scale of quality recovery residences, we must:
 - Provide adequate funding to ensure quality
 - Address the safety of all residents when relapse occurs

2. A study in collaboration with the Department of Health and Fletcher Group will:
 - Summarize the landscape of current availability
 - Identify priorities for scaling
 - Recommend models for funding and sustainability
 - Develop performance measurement systems

3. Provide a common resident management platform to certified homes
 - Better outcomes and management of residents
 - More efficient for operators than existing systems
 - Common data collection across certified homes
 - Performance measurement and continuous improvement
Incentivizes certification

Specific Requests:

1. Increased base funding in the amount of \$1,559,000 for Vermont's Certified Recovery Residences.

2. Support for the Opioid Settlement Committee's recommendation of \$325,000 from settlements funds for Recovery Residence Scholarships.

3. Legislative measures aimed at enhancing the safety and well-being of all residents within recovery residences when a resident experiences a recurrence of their disease.

Benefits of Recovery Residences:

Reduced Substance Use: Recovery residences provide a supportive environment for individuals in recovery. Research indicates that residing in these homes is linked to lower substance use. The structured setting encourages abstinence from alcohol and other drugs.

Lower Likelihood of Relapse: Vermont's recovery residences contribute to a reduced risk of relapse. Removal from environments that may include trauma and/or fuel one's addiction is critical. Residents also benefit from the supportive community and recovery-oriented atmosphere, helping them maintain sobriety and avoid returning to substance use.

Improved Financial Stability: Individuals living in recovery homes often experience higher income levels. The stable environment allows them to focus on employment and financial well-being, positively impacting their quality of life.

Enhanced Family Relationships: Recovery residences foster a sense of community and connection. As residents work toward recovery, they often see improvements in family relationships. Vermont currently has 3 certified residences specific to supporting parents with children.

Certification Process: Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences (VTARR) certifies recovery homes based on rigorous national standards. Compliance is affirmed through documentation, onsite inspections, and responsiveness to concerns. VTARR offers different certification levels, including peer-run, monitored, supervised, and service provider residences.

Attachments:

1. NARR Certification Levels
2. Recovery Residences in the Continuum of Recovery
3. Downstreet Housing Report
4. Recovery Residences FAQ