



**Eric Fritz, President, Vermont Association of Adult Day Services
House & Senate Appropriation
Budget Request
February 13, 2025**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Eric Fritz. I am the Executive Director of Scotland House and the President of the Vermont Association of Adult day Services (VAADS). VAADS supports H.13.

Adult day centers provide a safe, supportive environment where people can come during the day and receive a range of professional health, social and therapeutic services, as well as nutritious meals, and valuable social interaction. Adult day services also provide respite, support, and education to family members and caregivers.

We were greatly appreciative when the Legislature increased our Medicaid reimbursement rate to \$25 an hour. While this increase assisted with our ability to offer our staff a higher wage, we still struggle with staff recruitment and retention in the current competitive market, not to mention the continued ever-present inflationary impact on our overall overhead costs.

The majority of Adult Day participants rely on Choices for Care. Under Medicaid rules, a provider can only be paid when services are provided; we are not compensated when a participant does not show up when they have signed up for a time slot. This happens quite a bit, as our participants are older and are often out sick, lack transportation, have doctor's appointments, or are simply unable to attend for a few days. The 11 VAADS programs recently calculated that the total amount of money that was lost due to absenteeism over six months in 2024 was just over \$882,000. Therefore, we are requesting \$880,000 from the General Fund to be split proportionally among the 11 programs. While this will not cover all of our losses from absenteeism, it will help offset some of the lost revenue as we continue our efforts to maintain long term financial sustainability.

We also hope that you will support in the FY2026 budget the full implementation of the increases for home-based Choices for Care services and Enhanced Residential Care (ERC) described in the February 15, 2023 Department of Vermont Health Access rate study. We also support the request from the Long-Term Care Crisis coalition for a 4% increase in reimbursement rates for all HCBS providers.