



United Ways of Vermont

VT 211 Testimony to the House Committee on Healthcare

February 11, 2026

Good afternoon. For the record, I am Alison Lamagna, Executive Director of United Ways of Vermont and Vermont 211. I am joined today by Dr. Keith Robinson, Vice Chair of Quality Improvement and Population Health, UVM Children's Hospital. Also joining us today is Kristin Fontaine, Community Access Health Equity Supervisor, UVM Health Network.

Today is 211 Day, an annual observance celebrating the three-digit resource that helps millions of people across North America connect to help. In Vermont, VT 211 provides free, statewide access to community resources by phone, text, and a 24/7 searchable online database.

VT 211's mission is to promote the health and well-being of all Vermonters through a statewide information and referral system that streamlines access to community resources. We are a nationally accredited information and referral service and serve as the centralized, trusted source of health and human service information for the state.

VT 211 is the front door to Vermont's health and human services system, providing confidential, nonjudgmental, and barrier-free support, including interpretation services for callers who speak languages other than English. We are also an integral partner in disaster response and recovery, supporting communities during Tropical Storm Irene, COVID-19, and the flooding events of 2023 and 2024.

Today, our database includes over 11,900 services. In 2025 alone, VT 211 responded to more than 61,000 contacts and made over 22,000 referrals, most often for housing, utilities support, tax preparation, public assistance, and individual and family supports. We also connect veterans, people with disabilities, and older adults with services.

While VT 211 has traditionally been aligned with the House Committee on Human Services, we are here today to highlight innovative initiatives that directly impact health care systems and community health outcomes. Although we are not here to focus on budget matters, I do want to note that a fully funded VT 211 is essential to keeping Vermont's information and referral system strong. Thanks to the Legislature's support last year, VT 211 reached a sustainable funding level, allowing us to listen more closely to community needs through a strategic planning process, and explore new, impactful ways to expand support. I must also share that the Governor's proposed FY27 budget reduces VT 211 funding by \$332,000, which would directly impact our core services and limit our ability to advance initiatives like the one we are here to discuss. VT 211 needs level funding



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of \$1.64 million in FY27, consistent with FY26. We are not requesting an increase and are reallocating funds to focus on sustaining operations during the highest-need hours of 4pm-10pm.

We are here today to share an exciting new closed-loop referral initiative. Across the country, 211s are partnering with health systems to address social factors that affect health and well-being. We are thrilled to be working with UVM Health Network to build a closed loop between VT 211 and Epic, UVMHN's data system, strengthening coordination between health care and human services and improving outcomes for Vermonters. At this point, I'll turn it over to Dr. Robinson for an overview of the social drivers of health, the need for change, the return of investment on this closed loop system, and what is possible in systems like this. Dr. Robinson is a pediatric pulmonologist, Vice Chair of Quality Improvement and Population Health at UVM Children's Hospital, and Medical Director of Clinical Informatics – Improvement Science.