

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Human Services to which was referred House Bill No.
3 218 entitled “An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid
4 Abatement Special Fund” respectfully reports that it has considered the same
5 and recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. APPROPRIATIONS; OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

8 (a) In fiscal year 2026, the following sums shall be appropriated from the
9 Opioid Abatement Special Fund established in 18 V.S.A. § 4774:

10 (1)(A) \$1,976,000.00 to the Department of Health to fund 26 outreach
11 or case management staff positions within the preferred provider network for
12 the provision of services that increase motivation of and engagement with
13 individuals with substance use disorder in settings such as police barracks,
14 shelters, social service organizations, and elsewhere in the community.

15 (B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that these positions shall
16 be funded annually by the Opioid Abatement Special Fund unless and until the
17 Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

18 (2) \$76,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to
19 Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform to fund an outreach worker position.

20 (3)(A) \$1,400,000.00 to the Department of Health for recovery
21 residences certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences.

1 (B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that recovery residences
2 be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the
3 Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

4 (4)(A) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Health for syringe services.

5 (B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that syringe services be
6 funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the
7 Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

8 (5) \$800,000.00 to the Department of Health for grants to providers for
9 ongoing support for contingency management.

10 (6) \$32,157.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the
11 Brattleboro Fire Department to establish community training programs on the
12 administration of opioid antagonists, CPR, first aid, and Stop the Bleed
13 protocols.

14 (7) \$44,229.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the
15 Champlain Housing Trust to continue a pilot program providing access to
16 wound care and preventative health care in three low-barrier shelters within
17 Chittenden County.

18 (8) \$800,000.00 for distribution between both:

19 (A) the Department for Children and Families' Office of Economic
20 Opportunity to support long-term programs at shelters for individuals

1 experiencing homelessness, including harm-reduction supports and clinical
2 nursing programs; and

3 (B) the Department of Corrections for distribution to Pathways
4 Vermont to implement a contingency management pilot program in Chittenden
5 County for individuals under the supervision of the Department of Corrections.

6 (9) \$309,000.00 to the Department of Health for Health Care and
7 Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont's Project Connectionworks to
8 reduce opioid use disorder morbidity and mortality in Windham County
9 through prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

10 (10) \$50,000.00 to the Judicial Branch to train Vermont's judges on
11 issues related to opioid use disorder and strategies for use in dockets statewide.

12 (11) \$200,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Elevate
13 Youth Services to establish Healthy Youth Program counselors at the
14 Basement Teen Center at Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Washington County.

15 (12) \$100,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Friends
16 for Change's Youth Center in Bellows Falls for the purpose of delivering
17 intervention strategies and harm reduction supports to youth and young adults.

18 (13) \$170,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to
19 Spectrum Youth and Family Services for two new positions to expand opioid
20 use disorder screening, treatment, and case management services to youth in
21 Chittenden and Franklin Counties.

1 (14) \$80,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Prevent
2 Child Abuse Vermont for the purpose of teaching parenting skills and
3 providing social and emotional parenting supports for individuals with opioid
4 use disorder.

5 (15) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and
6 Independent Living for distribution to HireAbility Vermont to provide
7 specialized employment services for individuals with opioid use disorder in
8 Burlington, Newport, Rutland, and Bennington.

9 (16) \$550,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to
10 Northeast Kingdom Community Action to hire four peer support specialists to
11 assist individuals with opioid use disorder who are transitioning out of
12 homelessness into safe, permanent housing.

13 (17) \$150,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to
14 Connecticut Valley Addiction Services, Inc. to expand opioid use treatment in
15 rural Windsor County.

16 (18) \$300,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to
17 Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform and the Johnson Health Center to
18 continue and improve the Managed Medical Response Partnership.

19 (19) \$30,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to
20 Treatment Associates of Washington County Mental Health to hire an
21 embedded recovery coach.

1 § 4754. LIMITATION ON PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

2 (a) A health insurance plan shall not require prior authorization for
3 prescription drugs for a patient who is receiving ~~medication-assisted treatment~~
4 medication for opioid use disorder if the dosage prescribed is within the U.S.
5 Food and Drug Administration’s dosing recommendations.

6 (b) A health insurance plan shall not require prior authorization for all
7 counseling and behavioral therapies associated with ~~medication-assisted~~
8 ~~treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder for a patient who is receiving
9 medication-assisted treatment.

10 Subchapter 2. Opioid Settlement

11 * * *

12 § 4772. OPIOID SETTLEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

13 * * *

14 (b) Membership.

15 (1) The Advisory Committee shall be composed of the following
16 members and shall reflect the diversity of Vermont in terms of gender, race,
17 age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, and
18 socioeconomic status and ensure inclusion of individuals with lived experience
19 of opioid use disorder and their family members whenever possible:

20 * * *

1 (E) a primary care prescriber with experience providing ~~medication-~~
2 ~~assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder within the Blueprint for
3 Health hub and spoke model, appointed by the Executive Director of the
4 Blueprint for Health, to provide a statewide perspective on the provision of
5 ~~providing medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder
6 services;

7 * * *

8 (c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Committee shall demonstrate broad
9 ongoing consultation with individuals living with opioid use disorder about
10 their direct experience with related systems, including ~~medication-assisted~~
11 ~~treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder, residential treatment, recovery
12 services, harm reduction services, overdose, supervision by the Department of
13 Corrections, and involvement with the Department for Children and Families'
14 Family Services Division. To that end, the Advisory Committee shall
15 demonstrate consultation with individuals with direct lived experience of
16 opioid use disorder, frontline support professionals, the Substance Misuse
17 Oversight Prevention and Advisory Council, and other stakeholders to identify
18 spending priorities as related to opioid use disorder prevention, intervention,
19 treatment, and recovery services and harm reduction strategies for the purpose
20 of providing recommendations to the Governor, the Department of Health, and

1 the General Assembly on prioritizing spending from the Opioid Abatement
2 Special Fund. The Advisory Committee shall consider:

3 (1) the impact of the opioid crisis on communities throughout Vermont,
4 including communities' abatement needs and proposals for abatement
5 strategies and responses;

6 (2) the perspectives of and proposals from opioid use disorder
7 prevention coalitions, recovery centers, and ~~medication-assisted treatment~~
8 medication for opioid use disorder providers; and

9 (3) the ongoing challenges of the opioid crisis on marginalized
10 populations, including individuals who have a lived experience of opioid use
11 disorder.

12 * * *

13 (e) Presentation. Annually, the Advisory Committee shall vote on its
14 recommendations. If the recommendations are supported by an affirmative
15 vote of the majority, the Advisory Committee shall present its
16 recommendations for expenditures from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund
17 established pursuant to this subchapter to the Department of Health and
18 concurrently submit its recommendations in writing to the House Committees
19 on Appropriations and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on
20 Appropriations and on Health and Welfare. The Advisory Committee's
21 written recommendations shall address how each recommendation meets one

1 or more of the criteria listed in subsections 4774(b) and (c) of this subchapter.

2 The Advisory Committee shall give priority consideration to services requiring
3 funding on an ongoing basis.

4 (f) Meetings.

5 (1) The Commissioner of Health shall call the first meeting of the
6 Advisory Committee to occur on or before June 30, 2022.

7 (2) Annually, the Advisory Committee shall elect a voting vice chair
8 from among its nongovernmental members.

9 (3) The Advisory Committee shall meet at least quarterly but not more
10 than 12 times per calendar year.

11 ~~(3)~~(4) The Advisory Committee shall adopt procedures to govern its
12 proceedings and organization, including voting procedures and how the
13 staggered terms shall be apportioned among members.

14 ~~(4)~~(5) All meetings of the Advisory Committee shall be consistent with
15 Vermont's Open Meeting Law pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2.

16 * * *

17 § 4774. OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

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19 (c) Priority for expenditures from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund shall
20 be aimed at reducing overdose deaths, including the following:

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(5) expanding the availability of warm handoff programs and recovery services, specifically:

(A) expanding services such as navigators and on-call teams to begin ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder in hospital emergency departments;

* * *

(6) treating incarcerated populations, specifically:

(A) providing evidence-based or evidence-informed treatment and recovery support, including ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder for individuals with opioid use disorder or co-occurring substance use or mental health disorders while transitioning out of the criminal justice system; and

* * *

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

1

2 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

5

FOR THE COMMITTEE