

**AIDS Services Organizations**  
**FY 27 - House Human Services Committees**  
**February 18, 2026**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We have a couple of requests for the FY 27 budget.

**1. HIV/AIDS and harm reduction funding sections of the budget**

In all previous fiscal years, HIV/AIDS and harm reduction funding language has resided in E.312. This year, the Administration split the funding into 2 sections – E.312 for HIV/AIDS services and E.312.1 for harm reduction services. Per the Department’s amendments, the funding in E.312.1 can no longer be used for both HIV and harm reduction services. This is a significant change. Since the beginning of time, it seems, these funds have been used for both HIV and harm reduction services, so they cannot be broken up into 2 separate sections. We are requesting that the language remain as it has been drafted for years, as set forth at the end of our memo, putting them back together in one section and ensuring that the funds can be used for both HIV and harm reduction services.

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**2. Increase in funding - \$45,000 consistent with the FY 26 BAA**

The only increase in funding that we are requesting is a continuation of the FY 26 BAA amount that the House and Senate both approved - \$295,000 to \$340,000 in subsection (2) for HIV and harm reduction services.

**3. No reduction of grants without prior approval**

There is a section in our language that says that the Department of Health shall not reduce any of the 3 grants in this section to levels below those in the current fiscal year. Note that this language was put in by Rep. Fagan several years ago, because the Department had unilaterally decided to reduce the grant amounts during the fiscal year. The Department kept this section in their proposal, but it only applies to some of the grants.

**4. Gap funding**

A couple of years ago, the Department changed the grant period - from a calendar to a fiscal year - so the ASOs had a 6-month shortfall. The Department told the ASOs that they would provide them with additional funds to cover that 6-month gap. The ASOs didn’t ask for budget language to that effect, as they trusted that the funds would be forthcoming. To date, they have not received those funds - so we are in the process of working with the Department to get those funds. If that does not happen imminently, we will draft some language to address this.

**5. Grant distribution**

This is more for your information - In the past, all of our grants have come from the Division of Laboratory Sciences and Infectious Diseases at the Department of Health. Now that most of our grants are to be distributed by DSU, they are not distributed in a timely fashion. We are looking into whether an amendment to address this challenge might be appropriate.

Thank you, once again, for providing us the opportunity to come before you to discuss this relatively small, but very important, part of the budget.

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**We are requesting the following language in E.312:**

Sec. E.312 HEALTH; PUBLIC HEALTH

(a) HIV/AIDS funding:

(1) In fiscal year 2027 and as provided in this section, the Department of Health shall provide grants in the amount of \$475,000 in AIDS Medication Rebates special funds to the Vermont AIDS service and peer-support organizations for client-based support services. The Department of Health AIDS Program shall meet at least quarterly with the Community Advisory Group with current information and data relating to service initiatives. The funds shall be allocated according to a Request for Proposal process.

(2) In fiscal year 2027, and as provided by this section, the Department of Health shall provide grants in the amount of **\$340,000** from the General Fund for **HIV and** Harm Reduction Services to the following organizations:

(A) Vermont CARES: **\$165,000** ;

(B) AIDS Project of Southern Vermont: **\$110,000**; and

(C) HIV/HCV Resource Center: **\$60,000**.

(3) Ryan White Title II funds for AIDS services and the Vermont Medication Assistance Program shall be distributed in accordance with federal guidelines. The federal guidelines shall not apply to programs or services funded solely by State General Fund.

(A) The Secretary of Human Services shall immediately notify the Joint Fiscal Committee if at any time there are insufficient funds in Vermont Medication Assistance Program to assist all eligible individuals. The Secretary shall work in collaboration with persons living with HIV/AIDS to develop a plan to continue access to Vermont Medication Assistance Program medications until such time as the General Assembly can take action.

(B) As provided in this section, the Secretary of Human Services shall work in collaboration with the Vermont Medication Assistance Program Advisory Committee, which shall be composed of not less than 50 percent of members who are living with HIV/AIDS. If a modification to the program's eligibility requirements or benefit coverage is considered, the Committee shall make recommendations regarding the program's formulary of approved medication, related laboratory testing, nutritional supplements, and eligibility for the program.

(4) In fiscal year 2027, the Department of Health shall provide grants in the amount of \$400,000 General Fund for **HIV and** Harm Reduction Services not later than September 1, 2026. The method by which these prevention funds are distributed shall be determined by mutual agreement of the Department of Health and the Vermont AIDS service organizations and other Vermont HIV/AIDS prevention providers.

(5) In fiscal year 2027, the Department of Health shall not reduce any grants to the Vermont AIDS service and peer-support organizations or syringe service programs from funds appropriated for HIV/AIDS services to levels below those in fiscal year 2026 without receiving prior approval from the Joint Fiscal Committee.