



DATE: February 20, 2025
NAME: Dr. Andrea McManus
LOCATION: Moretown, VT
SUBJECT: FY26 Budget Hearing

My name is Dr. Andrea Silva McManus, and I am a resident of Moretown, Vermont. I serve as the Regional Manager for Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR), a member organization of Recovery Partners of Vermont (RPV). I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today about the critical need for sustained and increased funding for Vermont's certified recovery residences. As a person in recovery from Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), which I developed after undergoing weight loss surgery in 2010, I struggled with its effects for 12 years, experiencing devastating impacts on my health, career, finances, and family. I have recovered and rebuilt all these areas of my life, and I am writing a book about the phenomenon of alcoholism after weight loss surgery and surgery in general. Funding is crucial to continue the vital work of certified recovery residences so we can continue to help Vermonter's heal, get well, recover and rebuild their lives. Sober living is a crucial step in this process.

Certified recovery residences provide a family-like living environment and a foundation for long-term recovery, offering peer support, structure, and accountability for individuals transitioning from substance use disorder to independent living. These homes operate on the Social Model of Recovery, fostering community and connection, which research shows are essential for sustained sobriety.

However, the cost of maintaining and expanding these vital recovery residences continues to rise due to inflationary pressures on housing, utilities, staffing, and essential services. To ensure that every Vermonter in recovery has access to safe and stable recovery housing, Recovery Partners of Vermont is requesting a \$360,000 increase in base funding for certified recovery residences. Additionally, we seek \$1.5 million from the Opioid Settlement Fund to support startup and operational costs for existing and new homes, along with \$325,000 in scholarship funding to cover initial membership costs for individuals without financial means.

Without adequate funding, Vermont risks losing crucial recovery resources, leaving individuals vulnerable to relapse and homelessness. The demand for recovery housing far exceeds the current supply, and increasing state support will allow us to expand into communities that currently lack this critical resource.

Thanks to legislative support last year, we were able to bring 40 additional recovery home beds online in Bennington, Barre, and Springfield, helping to meet the growing need for recovery housing. This investment has made a tangible difference, ensuring that more Vermonters in early recovery have access to stable, supportive housing.

I urge you to support this funding to ensure that recovery residences remain accessible, affordable, and fully equipped to meet the needs of Vermonters on their path to recovery. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrea McManus
Email: Andrea@vfor.org | Phone #: (802) 917-2261