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TO: SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE
FROM: VERMONT CARE PARTNERS
RE: H.938 – HOMELESSNESS CONTINUUM
DATE: APRIL 29, 2026

Dear Members of the Senate Health & Welfare Committee,

The VCP Network continues to have serious concerns with the provisions in H.938, specifically in the “housing responsibilities’ section, related to mandated treatment for individuals engaged in the homelessness continuum.

A substantial body of research shows that forced treatment is not only ineffective but can in some cases produce the opposite of the intended outcome - particularly for individuals with substance use disorders, where engagement and recovery are deeply tied to trust, autonomy, and readiness.

Our organizations are built around voluntary, relationship-based services. Requiring participation in treatment fundamentally alters that dynamic, undermining the trust between providers and the people they serve. It also risks creating service bottlenecks - where limited treatment capacity is occupied by individuals who are not ready or able to engage - while others who are actively seeking care are left waiting.

We are also concerned about the operational impact of this proposal. While our agencies already serve some individuals within the homelessness continuum, this provision would increase demand without any corresponding investment in community-based capacity. This effectively creates an unfunded mandate on a system that is already stretched thin. While secondary to the impact on individuals, this strain on providers is real and consequential.

Importantly, we know what does work. Through consistent engagement with housing case managers and their supportive services, individuals often choose to access mental health, substance use, and developmental services when they are ready. These pathways - grounded in trust and person-centered planning - lead to more meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

We strongly believe that individuals are best served by focusing on their housing plans and working in partnership with their housing teams, with community-based providers available and ready to engage as individuals choose to do so.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if you have further questions.

Best,
Amy Johnson - Director of Legislative Affairs & Public Policy

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