

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

FROM: Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health

DATE: January 27, 2025

RE: Follow-up to January 23rd Testimony: Wyman Report Activities; Vacancy Rate

1. *What is the Department's level of involvement in Act 167 and Wyman Report related AHS initiatives?*

Department of Mental Health (DMH) work related to Act 167 has largely been focused on the utilization of emergency departments and the efficiency of flow throughout the mental health system.

The DMH Medical Director meets monthly with the medical directors of emergency departments statewide, along with the Vermont Association of Hospital and Health Systems (VAHHS), to discuss any concerns around availability of mental health beds and requirements for those beds. In addition, DMH Case Management and Medical Director meet weekly with the medical directors of inpatient psychiatric units to provide updates on unit acuity, staffing concerns, and any urgent placement needs within the system.

2. *What is the Department's current vacancy rate?*

As of January 23rd, DMH has an overall vacancy rate of 29.6%. The vacancy rate at DMH operated facilities Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital and River Valley Therapeutic Residence is 38.2%.

