



State of Vermont

Department of Mental Health
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Agency of Human Services

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February 23, 2021

Green Mountain Care Board
Attn: Donna Jerry, Health Care Administrator
144 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Ms. Jerry:

The Vermont Department of Mental Health (DMH) is submitting this Letter of Intent as it intends to develop a new Secure Residential Treatment Program as a successor to the state-run Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence (MTCR) that was temporarily sited in the Town of Middlesex following Tropical Storm Irene in 2012. The total cost for this project will be approximately \$16,072,200.00.

Since the opening of the temporary MTCR secure residential program in 2013 under an Emergency CON issued in 2012, DMH has served fifty-two residents who would otherwise have remained hospitalized in higher, more restricted levels of care. Over 61% of residents have successfully transitioned from MTCR to other community-based services with an average length of stay of 10.4 months in the program. With this project, DMH will be developing a permanent replacement for secure adult co-ed residential treatment program, DMH seeks to increase program bed capacity from 7 to up to 16 beds to serve a similar population who would otherwise remain hospitalized in the absence of the necessary secure community-based treatment and services program.

As outlined in its Act 26, Section 2 - "Analysis of Residential Mental Health Bed Needs" (2019) Report to the Legislature, DMH cited "At any given time, there are approximately 6-15 people who could be referred to a secure residential program that has the capacity to perform occasional Emergency Involuntary Procedures (EIPs)." This cohort of individuals occupy significant inpatient hospital bed days and cannot be appropriately served at the Middlesex secure residential program (MTCR) due to current regulations for Therapeutic Community Residences, the facility's design, and the staffing pattern. **95% of referrals to the secure residential facility are from Level 1 units across the state.**"

Subsequent to this Act 26 report, DMH continues to see comparable numbers of inpatients eligible for MTCR residential treatment services with expansion of bed capacity, design improvements, and changes in regulation that will better meet the needs of this population. Ongoing availability of such a residential resource will help to ensure that individuals in need for hospitalization are able to access that level of care and individuals presenting to emergency rooms for inpatient beds will not see unnecessary delays or lengthy periods of wait times in emergency departments across the state.

The proposed site for construction is 26 Woodside Drive located off Route 15 in Essex, the site of the former state-run Woodside Youth Rehabilitation Facility recently closed by the Vermont Department of Children and Family Services. The state-owned site includes 10.2 acres, 5.4 acres of which are developed. The site is naturally shielded from Route 15 by a steep slope to the north and west. The

Winooski River natural area drops away on the east and south, giving the site privacy and natural vistas. The existing 13,800 square foot Woodside program building will be demolished to make way for the new facility. The site also features an existing gymnasium which will be renovated to meet new program population use needs. The site features an access drive and plans approximately 40 parking spaces for the facility. Site work and land preparation for new construction will be extensive given the proposed design. A rough estimate of an area of disturbance for the project is approximately 135,000 square feet, or just over 3 acres.

New building construction that meets the needs of the program, still in design, is anticipated to be a three-wing, single story residential-look building with full attic access for mechanical equipment and maintenance. The new facility will offer locked-secure program services within an approximately 17,000 square feet footprint. The secure residential program will operate as a state-wide resource for those adults meeting assessed need and eligibility for the residential treatment program services. Anticipated length of stay is projected to be an average of 18-24 months for transition back to other community-based residential and mental health support services.

Design plans include typical residential dining, living and relaxation spaces, and single occupancy bedrooms. Additionally, service space will include necessary offices, treatment and wellness service space, and meeting spaces for staff, residents, and visitors. Augmenting the existing gym use will be outdoor and recreation space sufficient for the program size. The facility grounds will afford accessible areas from two access points from the building. Both outside spaces, the larger area approximately 5,000 square feet and a smaller 1,300 square foot area, will be surrounded by a modern, privacy enhanced, no-climb 14 - foot security fence. DMH and Buildings and General Services BGS are hopeful to begin this project in June 2021.

The Vermont State Legislature authorized \$4,500,000.00 in funding for this project if the FY 21 legislative session. Additional funding of \$11,572,200.00 for this project is currently in the Capital Bill request for the FY 22 session. The project will be fully completed using Capital Funding of approximately \$16,072,200.00 and will be completed in FY 23 if allowed to proceed as scheduled.

The DMH anticipates submitting an application for this project in the timeframe required upon acceptance of this Letter of Intent.

Sincerely,



Frank Reed, LICSW
Director of Mental Health Services
Agency of Human Services
Department of Mental Health

Cc: Sarah Squirrel, Commissioner DMH
Mourning Fox, Deputy Commissioner DMH
Karen Barber, General Counsel DMH
Shannon Thompson, Finance Director DMH
Tabrena Karish, BGS