

**Rural Health Services Task Force**  
**Approved Meeting Notes**  
**December 6, 2019**

**Members Present:**

Robin Lunge, Member, GMCB  
John Olson, Chief, State Office of Rural Health & Primary Care, VT Dept. of Health  
Mike Fisher, Office of the Health Care Advocate  
Devon Green, VP of Government Relations, VAHHS (designee for Steve Gordon, President and CEO, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital)  
Dr. Rick Barnett, Licensed Psychologist-Doctorate, Licensed Alcohol/Drug Counselor  
Toby Howe (designee for Laura Pelosi, Vermont Health Care Association)  
Ena Backus, Director of Health Care Reform, Agency of Human Services;  
Dr. Paul Parker, Richmond Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine  
Steve Maier (designee for Tony Morgan, Executive Director, The Rutland Free Clinic)  
Dillon Burns, Director, Mental Health Services of Vermont Care Partners (Julie Tessler, Vermont Care Partners acted as designee when Dillon had to leave the meeting)

**Members by Phone:**

Jill Olson, Executive Director, VNAs of Vermont; Dan Bennett, Present & CEO, Gifford Medical Center

**Absent Members:**

Dr. Melissa Volansky, MD, Stowe Family Practice, Executive Medical Director, CHSLV; Kate Burkholder, LADC, Treatment Associates, Inc

**Public Present:**

Sarah Clark, CFO, AHS; Sandy McGuire, CFO and COO, Howard Center; Heidi Hall, CFO, Washington County Mental Health; Sarah Holland, Washington ; Bob Bick, Howard Center; Kim Fitzgerald, Cathedral Square; Jessa Barnard, Vermont Medical Society; Susan Aranoff, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council; Rebecca Lewandoski, Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC; Lucie Garand, Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC; Jennifer Kaulius, Government and Community Relations, UVMCMC; Spencer Weppeler, OneCare VT; Kristen Murphy, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council; Susan Ridzon, Health First ED

**I. Minute Approval**

The Task Force approved minutes from the November 5<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> meetings.

**II. Report Schedule**

Robin Lunge reviewed the calendar and deadlines for the upcoming report:

- Financial metric workbook- due December 15<sup>th</sup>
- Inventory maps and explanations- due December 15<sup>th</sup>
- Final workforce white paper- due December 15<sup>th</sup>
- Comments due on rough draft- December 15<sup>th</sup>
- Comments due on final draft- January 2<sup>nd</sup>

**III. Global Commitment Financial Issues**

Sarah Clarke, CFO for the Agency of Human Services, presented an overview of Vermont's Global Commitment Waiver. Sarah discussed the purpose of the waiver, budget neutrality and investment

spending. Sarah explained that the new waiver, expiring 12/31/2021, has tighter controls than the previous waiver and that if the cap is exceeded, the State would need to use general fund dollars. Sarah answered questions about a pending Medicaid waiver for free-standing institutions for Mental Disease (IMDs).

#### **IV. Designated Agency Financial Health**

Sandy McGuire, CFO and COO for the Howard Center, and Heidi Hal, CFO for Washington County Mental Health, presented a financial assessment of the designated agencies and specialized service agencies in Vermont. Sandy and Heidi discussed the rising demand for services, workforce pressures and financial sustainability challenges. The designated agencies collectively self-report and self-monitor financial documents and health metrics.

#### **V. Financial Sustainability Recommendations**

The Task Force discussed the recommendations put forth by members.

The Group discussed the designated agencies' proposal to assign review of key financial performance indicators of health care organizations receiving state appropriated funds to the Green Mountain Care Board. There was no consensus on this recommendation.

The Group discussed additional proposals from Task Force members but did not vote. Instead, the Group agreed that a general recommendation focused on administrative burden and reimbursement, opposed to sector-specific recommendations, would be a better approach. The Group agreed on focusing on a system-level problem statement further supported by entity level examples.

#### **VI. Next Steps**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17<sup>th</sup> in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room of the Pavilion.