From: LaJeunesse, Kristen
To: LaJeunesse, Kristen
Subject: A Public Comment Form was submitted 10/23/2023 5:11:30 PM
Date: Monday, October 23, 2023 1:11:35 PM

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

Submit Time: 10/23/2023 5:11:30 PM

Name: Kate M.
Affiliation: UVM Porter Medical Ceneter
Town/City:

Topic: Transgender Health Services/Accessibililty/AAC

Comment: I work as an SLP at Porter Medical Center. 1) Several patients have asked for more information regarding transgender voice and communication services, and I believe the Green Mountain Board can play a vital role in expanding access. According to the Trevor Project's Vermont analysis (found here: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/The-Trevor-Project-2022-National-Survey-on-LGBTQ-Youth-Mental-Health-by-State-Vermont.pdf), roughly half of Vermont LGBTQ+ youth were unable to access health services (page 3), many of whom could not find a provider. The goal is to continually strive for greater LGBTQ+ healthcare equity. 2) I notice that office buildings and medical centers are not easily accessible for everyone. For example, office doorways are difficult to navigate for powerchair users because the frame is too narrow. 3) I work with several patients who require alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) for a wide variety of reasons (nonverbal as a result of a stroke, neurological disease etc.). I have been working with the Vermont Veterans Affairs department for several months, however, they do not have any in-state AAC evaluators. As a result, we were referred out-of-state to SLPs virtually in CT to obtain funding approval. The CT SLPs say they are overloaded with their CT clients as is and cannot keep up with the additional VT clients. Can the Green Mountain Care Board establish more expansive access to AAC funding, evaluations, and trial devices? As Vermont's population ages, more people may need access to AAC yet the system is already overloaded as is. Being able to communicate is vital to providing quality healthcare. One nonverbal patient of mine in particular was recently brought to the ER for an emergency, but he was unable to verbalize his symptoms since he did not have access to AAC which resulted in him staying longer in MedSurg and also caused critical communication breakdowns.

Post Comment: Yes