

State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)

October 17, 2024

Meeting held virtually by ZOOMGov

**Attendees**

**Committee Members:** Barbara Lee, Bethany Drum, David Ballou, Max Barrows, Annie Jackson, Barb Prine, Chad Cleverly, Cheryl Thrall, Ed Place, Connie Woodberry and Susan Yuan

**State Employees:** Jennifer Garabedian, Carolyn Bowen, Jessica Bernard, Hilary Conant, Tina Fede, Steve Fish, Melanie Feddersen, Jeff Nunemaker, Dave Ramos, Ellen Booth, Emma Rose McCadden and Judy Spittle

**Guests:** Ben Gallagher, Judith Jackson, George McWilliam, Jen Hayes, Katrina D. Marie Lallier, Kirsten Murphy, George McWilliam, Kirsten Merriam Shapiro, Chuck M, Ashleigh Goldberg, Elise Haydon, Jess Blais, Alison Harte, Hannah Schwartz, Michael Kasper, Kara Artus

**Roll Call and Review of Agenda and minutes –**

September minutes were reviewed and approved by Bethany Drum and 2<sup>nd</sup> by David Ballou

Housing Pilot Updates

UVS will report out at November's SPSC meeting. They were at a housing conference at the time of this meeting.

All 3 housing pilots have extended time to end of calendar year. The Riverflow and Upper Valley Services projects were given extra time and extra money. The Chittenden Housing Trust project was given extra time to use the money that they had been given initially.

Champlain Housing Trust Update

The planning has been done. 10 Unites, 8 1-bedrooms, 2 2-bedrooms, 1 flexible one bedroom that can become two if needed.

Shared spaces – Kitchen/dining, laundry, living area and outdoor patio.

Smart home technology throughout.

Kirsten Merriam Shapiro and Alison Harte shared their challenges and lessons learned throughout this process.

Challenges

Service Providers found it difficult to plan with unknown tenants. Without knowledge of the specific tenants, cannot plan for the services that would be needed.

Technology consultation was helpful but also challenging in planning. Policies and procedures developed are good but real-life training for staff would have been useful.

Partners – frustrated with the hypothetical aspect of the process.

Trailblazing is rewarding but the policies and regulations around VT rules and SOCP, Medicaid Settings rule were confusing. It wasn't always clear what was permissible at times.

### Lessons

- Developing affordable housing for people with DD take time.
- It is very challenging using the funding streams for these types of housing models.
- Have to keep a flexible mind set. Talk to potential tenants.
- Having a site was helpful to the design process. Not sure how that would have worked if we didn't have access to a building.

Shared pictures of the 322 Saint Paul Street location.

Questions:

For final report later in the year – hear more about the challenges

See full presentation here: <..\Presentations\CHT Grant Update\DS Standing Committee October 17.pdf>

### Riverflow Update

Riverflow Community has officially opened as a new therapeutic life-sharing home. It welcomed three families with children who have special needs.

Riverflow is now officially recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization. Although this process involved many challenges, they successfully navigated through them. In addition to receiving substantial funding from the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP), they also received a large monetary gift that enabled them to purchase the Riverflow property.

Hannah Schwartz added the challenge of the TCR process. (Therapeutic Community Residence)

We are building relationships with the Howard Center, WCMHS, and other designated agencies to facilitate discussions about Medicaid funding.

Additionally, Riverflow continues communicating with the Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) for guidance on renovations and compliance with federal and state regulations.

Riverflow has a 10-year plan with the hope of building 4-5 additional homes, a greenhouse, garden infrastructure, a chicken coop, a yurt for crafting, and a barn.

<https://www.riverflowcommunity.org/support-riverflow.php#wishlist>

WCMH, HC and CSAC – providing Case Management, Riverflow is doing housing and planning  
More detail on the staffing and funding models in the next report.

## Payment Reform

Changes to how we pay providers for developmental services and how much we pay for services. This is happening because we have to follow rules. Some of these rules are State of Vermont rules and some are from the federal government. These changes will happen in October 2025.

Discussion started with SLP

Get a tax-free stipend with no benefits

SLP Level 4 receives \$60,000, and Agency gets \$90,000, what does Agency do with the other \$30,000. Supporting the SLP themselves and the people as well as the workforce. Using that funding for nursing oversight, coordination activities, or crisis supports. Maintain SLP, retention to support the SLP environment.

These are all recommendations. We use the word “should” but not set in stone at this point.

Would this apply to direct support people as well. We are not proposing this.

Elise Haydon – are people being paid enough to stay in these jobs (SLP) bring up the SLP rate. Is there another way to deal with crisis issues other than using the \$30,000 from the Agency.

Individual budgets

Budget Assignment: Overview of model services mixes and individual budgets

People will get a budget range based on where they live. The budget will also be based on their needs. People with more needs get larger budgets

What will be in a bundle payment

- Group Living
- Staffed living
- Shared living
- Living with people who don't get aid
- Living independently

Where do other communities fit into these models. Heartbeat, Riverflow etc. Do we want to consider this in a SLP or group living. We have not developed a standard for this. We do not have a thorough answer to this at this time.

Barb P – suggested for Jessica to get through presentation then have questions. Hard to follow all the different things discussed.

Budgets: Services in the budget range

- Residential Supports
- Self-Directed Services and Supports (also called self and surrogate managed)
- Community Supports
- Employment Supports

Budgets Services not part of the budget range – Communication Support and Crisis

- Money will be added to a budget when someone needs:
  - Communication Support
  - Crisis Services

Budgets: Not part of the budget range - Equipment

- Home modifications
- Vehicle modifications

These services can be expensive, and most people do not get these services. Money will be added to the budget when someone needs it.

Budgets not part of budget range - Professional Services

Other services that will be paid for outside of the budget

- Clinical assessment
- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Family therapy
- Behavioral Support, Assessment, Planning and Consultation
- Medication and Medical Support and Consultation
- Other Supportive Services

The reason these services are not in the budget is because not everyone gets services. We do not want someone to get less community support because they need therapy. Can also pay for these services as fee-for-service

Aren't the clinical services paid for by State Plan Medicaid, when paid by Medicaid? Yes

### Regulations Overview

Upcoming changes to the Regulations implementing the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1996. This is known as Health Care Administrative Rule 7.100 (HCAR)

[DDAct Regulations 2023 ADOPTED.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#)

We may not be able to talk about certain things due to being in the embargo period (RFP session)

High level overview – setting the first layer of how things will look like

Major changes

- Updates to language and format
- Changes caused by Conflict of Interest (COI)
- Changes caused by Payment Reform

Updates to language and format

- Use of gender-neutral terms (removing he/she and replace with them)
- Updates to make things clearer
- Adding links (to System of Care Plan, Medicaid Manual etc.)

Changes caused by Conflict of Interest

- Changing names and definitions for DAs/SSAs
- Case Management Entity (CME) will employ Case Managers
- Direct Service Organization (DSO) will be the agency providing direct services
- Changing information about the roles of Case Managers and DAs/SSAs
- Changes to intake and eligibility

Changes related to Payment Reform

- Updating language to match new payment model
- Updating information about the needs assessment (SIS-A)
- Updating who approves funding for services and how they do it

e-mail feedback to below e-mail

[AHS.DAILDDSDSOCPRegulations@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.DAILDDSDSOCPRegulations@vermont.gov)

Questions:

When will the draft be out for review. July 2025

The conversation for this was very limited due to being in the embargo period. This presented challenges and frustrations. DDSD is committed to improving the process within the limits and incorporating authentic feedback.

