



State of Vermont
Agency of Human Services
280 State Drive, Center Building
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000

Global Commitment Register

August 18, 2023

GCR 23-098
FINAL

Medicaid Investment: Mental Health Consumer Support Programs

Policy Summary:

The Vermont Medicaid program established a Medicaid health-related investment for mental health consumer support programs to provide treatment, education, support, and advocacy services for individuals and families of individuals battling serious mental illness.

Primarily, this investment will fund the Pathways VT Support Line, which works to provide mental health and counseling services at a non-emergency level of service, to alleviate the burden on state run crisis services and to prevent mental health crises when possible. This investment will allow the Pathways VT Support Line to be accessible to all Vermonters 24/7 and to continue to promote resiliency and recovery within communities through support and connection to local mental health services. This investment will also fund peer-run residential and crisis bed services which work to improve health outcomes by filling gaps in services, providing referrals, linking individuals with support groups, and offering mental health screenings. Additionally, these residential and crisis bed services will provide assessment and treatment, case management, community supports, and other wrap around services for adults with severe and persistent mental illness.

This funding will improve the quality of care provided at a non-emergency level, prevent escalation of mental health crises, reduce the state-wide burden on emergency resources, and improve access to mental health and substance use services in Vermont. This investment will further improve health equity for the uninsured, underinsured, and Medicaid eligible individuals in Vermont by reducing stigma and improving visibility of important mental health resources in Vermont.

Effective Date:

August 15, 2023

Authority/Legal Basis:

[Global Commitment to Health Waiver](#)

Population Affected:

All Vermont residents including all Vermont Medicaid beneficiaries

Fiscal Impact:

The estimated gross annualized budget impact is \$5,000,000.

Public Comment Period:

The public comment period ended August 11, 2023. [One comment was received.](#)

To be added to the GCR email list, send an email to AHS.MedicaidPolicy@vermont.gov.

Additional Information:

The new investment template for Mental Health Consumer Support Programs can be found on the following pages.

ATTACHMENT S
New Investment Application Template

For each new investment, the state must submit the following information to CMS as described in STC 11.6.

Date	7/11/2023
Investment Title	Mental Health Consumer Support Programs
Estimated Amount	\$5,000,000
Time Period	8/15/2023 - Ongoing
Department	Department of Mental Health
Category	Increase the access to quality health care by low income, uninsured, underinsured individuals, and Medicaid beneficiaries in Vermont.
Project Objective, Targeted Outcomes, and Impact to Health Equity	
<p>The objective of this investment is to provide mental health support such as state-wide helplines, peer-run residential and crisis bed services, and other wrap around services for individuals with serious mental illness, their families, and communities at large. These services and supports will promote resiliency, improve health outcomes, reduce health disparities, and improve quality of life for uninsured, underinsured, and Medicaid eligible individuals in Vermont.</p> <p>Targeted outcomes of this investment include an increased number of individuals having access to essential support services such as the Pathways VT Support Line and other peer run and residential based crisis bed services. These programs, funded through this investment, will help to provide an increased number of Vermonters with counseling, assessment, treatment, and resource and peer support connection. Additionally, this investment targets outcomes such as increased screenings and referrals through these programs and services, and improved support for individuals with a mental health or substance use disorder. These above services will also work to reduce the state-wide burden on emergency services and improve the quality of care at a non-emergency level, which will likely help to prevent the escalation of mental health crises.</p> <p>The goal of this funding is to improve overall access to lifesaving mental health services and to fill in the current gaps in services to better meet the needs of Vermont residents. By improving current mental health and substance use disorder support services and by creating new services, this investment will improve access for many Vermont residents and improve equitable health outcomes. By reducing stigma, increasing visibility of support services, and connecting individuals with peer support groups, this investment will set Vermont residents up to be supported in their journey to recovery and reduce barriers to equitable health outcomes created by many structural determinants of health.</p>	
Project Description	
<p>This must include descriptions of specific terms associated with eligibility, benefits and services, and how the state intends to operationalize the program (e.g., population served, provider types, provider qualifications, methodology for incentive payments)</p>	

Primarily, this investment will fund the Pathways VT Support Line, which offers confidential, and non-judgmental support for all Vermonters over the age of 18. The VT Support Line is not a crisis helpline but instead works to provide mental health and counseling services at a non-emergency level of service, alleviate the burden on state run crisis services, and prevent mental health crises when possible. This investment will allow the Pathways VT Support Line to be accessible to all Vermonters 24/7 and to continue to promote resiliency and recovery within communities. This investment funds the Pathways VT Support Line and allows for all the services and supports this program provides to Medicaid eligible individuals as well as all Vermont residents.

This investment will also fund peer-run residential and crisis bed services, which will provide peer education, support, and advocacy services for individuals with a mental illness, their families and caregivers, and community members. These services will work to improve health outcomes, fill gaps in services, and help to connect individuals by providing referrals, linking individuals with support groups, and offering mental health screenings. Additionally, these residential and crisis bed services will provide assessment and treatment, medication management, case management, community support, transportation, employment supports, and housing support for adults with severe and persistent mental illness. These residential and crisis bed services will help reduce health outcome disparities and will serve uninsured, underinsured, and Medicaid eligible beneficiaries through organizations such as Alyssum, Another Way, NAMI, Pathways – Soteria, Support Line and Wellness Center, VAMHAR, and Vermont Psychiatric Survivors.

How does the state ensure there is no duplication of federal funding?

The Agency of Human Services operates under a Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) which is approved quarterly by HHS. The CAP ensures there is no duplication of funding because total expenses are allocated to the benefitting federal program.

Source of non-federal share

State General Fund

How does the state ensure that the investment does not include any activities listed in STC 11.6 (Investment Approval Process)?

AHS staff have reviewed project descriptions to ensure that the investment does not include any activities listed in STC #11.5 and will monitor program expenditures to ensure continued compliance with this requirement.

The state assures that in reporting cost, the state and providers must adhere to 45 CFR §75 Uniform Administration Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Health and Human Services (HHS) Awards and 42 CFR §413 Principles of Reasonable Cost Reimbursement. Pursuant to 45 CFR §75.302(a) the state must have proper fiscal control and accounting procedures in place to permit the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have not been used in violation of applicable statutes. Costs must be supported by adequate source documentation.