



**Council Connections** brings the latest news on disability rights, resources that promote inclusion, and opportunities for advocacy to individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members living in the heart of Vermont Communities.



## VTDDC SPONSORS FORUM ON HEALTH REFORM AND THE FUTURE OF MEDICAID

**To bolster Medicaid-funded community-based services, disability-rights advocates and service providers came together to discuss quality measures, financial agreements, and opportunities within healthcare reform.**

The day-long forum was a collaborative effort hosted by the [Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council](#), [Vermont Care Partners](#), and [Vermont Association for Mental Health and Addiction Recovery](#).

**Per Act 113**, all Medicaid programs must "align" with the Medicaid Accountable Care Program by the year 2020.

Several themes emerged from the day's conversations: Participants were unanimous in voicing their desire to have greater stakeholder participation in decisions about healthcare reform.

**"We wanted people who understood the system [Medicaid] well enough and have demonstrated commitment to today's success. People who would be positive, engaged, and would craft a message we could all get behind." - VTDDC Policy Analyst Susan Aranoff**

They also shared their concerns about aligning long term services and support (LTSS) with the All Payer Agreement. The provider culture in LTSS is very different from that of traditional medical care. Moreover, historically, LTSS have been underfunded, participants said.

Aranoff and Deputy Commissioner Michael Costa, from the Department of [Vermont Health Access](#), collaborated to present facts about healthcare reform in Vermont and how it is slated to evolve.

Participants will meet again before the legislative session to discuss their recommendations to policy makers.



**[Download the PowerPoint with notes](#)**  
as presented by  
**Susan Aranoff and Michael Costa.**

## NEW CUSTOMERS

Compare Plans  
and Sign Up



GET STARTED ►

There are four ways to sign-up during the Open enrollment period:  
Online, by phone, by paper, or in person.

Vermonters may call [1-855-899-9600](tel:1-855-899-9600) for guidance during the sign-up period.

## VERMONT HEALTH CONNECT REMINDS CONSUMERS TO COMPARE PLANS

**At a time when "shopping around" is a way of life for many Americans, Vermonters are urged to consider their budgets, their health, and insurance plans.**

Health plans that may have worked well for an individual or family this year may not work as well in 2019. This is because there have been adjustments in federal policy. Vermonters can anticipate changes to all 26 health plan options offered by the [Vermont Health Connect](#). The plans affected most are those that fall under the "silver-level" tier.

The [2019 Plan Comparison Tool](#) is the most reliable way for Vermonters to safely shop for savings without compromising their privacy.

People who continue to pay their insurance bill will not experience a lapse in service with the auto-renew feature. However, the [Department of Vermont Health Access](#) strongly cautions people from renewing prior to comparing plans.

**Open enrollment starts November 1st and runs to December 15<sup>th</sup> --** that's 45 days to research, compare, and begin payment. Those who miss the deadline will not have another opportunity to enroll or change plans until next year, unless they have a significant change in life circumstances like changing jobs or the birth of a child.

Applicants who qualify for Medicaid do not have a deadline.

For more information [read the press release from the office of Governor Phil Scott](#).



## NATIONAL ALERT FOR MISSING ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES PASSES THE HOUSE

**The proposed bill would give nationwide clearance to law enforcement agencies and allow them to reach the public whenever a missing adult with a disability is in danger.**

Adults with physical and/or intellectual disabilities are among the most vulnerable, but there is no official means to locate an adult who is considered lost, missing, or possibly in danger. The [Ashanti Alert](#) (H.R.5075) hopes to change that.

The bill is named for Ashanti Billie, a young woman with a developmental disability who went missing in Virginia in 2017. Billie's body was found in North Carolina 11 days later.

If passed by the Senate, the Justice Department would be tasked with designing a national alert service. The Ashanti Alert would reach the public through the same channels as the AMBER Alert (for children) and Silver Alert (for seniors).

The Ashanti Alert is named after a missing woman who did not qualify for an AMBER Alert. Her family believes if there had been an alert for people with disabilities that she'd still be alive.

Many Americans are already familiar with seeing these missing-person alerts pop-up on their cell phones.

For more information [read the article by CNN](#).

## YOUR VOICE MATTERS

This Public Service Announcement (PSA) encourages adults with disabilities to vote this election season. It is the first in-house audio project for radio created by the Council. The PSA is less than 30 seconds and was circulated to all Vermont radio stations.

A warm thank you to the many self-advocates who donated their voices.



### Questions? Comments?

Email us at [vtddc@vermont.gov](mailto:vtddc@vermont.gov) with the subject line "Your Voice Matters".

## WHAT'S UP, UNDER THE BIG DOME?

**VTDDC is at the State House closely monitoring policy that could impact Vermonters with developmental disabilities...**

Council members visited the offices of Senators Leahy and Sanders and Representative Welch.



### **October is Disability Awareness Month.**

- On October 15, Council Chair Miriam Stoll and Council member David Frye met with members of Congressman Welch's staff at his Burlington office and discussed the lives of Vermonters with developmental disabilities. They also discussed the ABLE Age Adjustment Act and asked Congressman Welch to become a co-sponsor.
- On October 16, Council members Mike Gruteke, Terry Holden, Jennifer Stratton, and Ed Paquin traveled to Senator Sanders's St. Johnsbury office and shared their experiences living in Vermont with a disability and providing direct services to people with disabilities in Vermont. They also discussed the ABLE Age Adjustment Act and officially requested that Senator Sanders become a co-sponsor.
- On October 30, Council members Kaiya Andrews and Terry Holden met with Senator Leahy's staff at his Montpelier office. They were joined by the Council's Executive Director Kirsten Murphy. The group discussed the work of the Council and officially asked that Senator Leahy consider co-sponsoring the Able Age Adjustment Act.

Council members were well-received in all three offices and forged

good connections with staff members of our Washington representatives. We are optimistic that one, if not all three, of the members of our Congressional delegation will sign on as a co-sponsor of the ABLE Age Adjustment Act. If you are an ABLE account holder, you can help by telling our Congressional delegation how ABLE has helped you.

Please contact VTDDC for more details at [Susan.Aranoff@Vermont.gov](mailto:Susan.Aranoff@Vermont.gov)



## SAVE THE DATE for the next Quarterly Meeting

**When:** Thursday, December 06, 2018

**Where:** Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired,  
South Burlington, Vermont

**Council members work together** to increase awareness about the needs of Vermonters with disabilities and encourage systems change. They are expected to attend four day-long meetings each year and to be active participants on a committee or work group.

The mission of VTDDC is to help build connections and supports that bring people with developmental disabilities, and their families, into the heart of Vermont Communities.