



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.



Nurses and health providers attended over one (1) million at-home appointments in Vermont within the past year.

RURAL AGENCIES FEAR CUTS IN FEDERAL REVENUE THAT SUPPORTS HOME HEALTH

Seven (7) of ten (10) home health agencies in Vermont may see a significant funding cut from the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) as eligibility phases out for supplemental payments to providers serving rural areas.

The so called "[rural ad-on](#)" was signed into the [Affordable Care Act](#) by the Obama Administration back in 2010. The addition was intended to widen the funding stream to small and vulnerable populations and pay home health staff fair wages for the valuable contributions they make in preventative care. But eligibility rules for these additional payments are changing, with an anticipated loss of \$1.2 million annually for Vermont.

**"...home health agencies -- bring together families and individuals with their medical providers in ways that none of us could do on our own."
- Representative David Yacovone**

Representative David Yacovone (Democrat, Lamoille-Washington) is no stranger to health policy. He once served as the Commissioner to the [Department for Aging and Independent Living](#), and he now sits on the [House Committee for Appropriations](#).

Yacovone notes that home health agencies have already experienced drastic cuts as Medicare rates have gradually dropped 14% since 2009. Yearly increases to the home health budget need to become standard, he says, instead of when the legislature has "extra money".



Home health agencies support children, adults, and seniors, with a wide range of mental and physical health conditions.

The [proposed rules could take effect as soon as the start of 2019](#), and phase out the rural ad-on completely by 2022.



26 different agencies, organizations, and consumers have commented on OneCare's Accountable-Care budget proposal thus far.

VERMONTERS SHARE EXPECTATIONS FOR HEALTHCARE PAYMENT REFORM

The Green Mountain Care Board is seeking public comment on a [costly budget proposal](#) that continues to reshape the way Vermonters pay for health and healthcare outcomes.

The University of Vermont's accountable care, [OneCare Vermont](#), has proposed a budget of \$903 million dollars, which must be approved by the [Green Mountain Care Board](#). OneCare hopes to reduce healthcare spending by changing the way it pays enrolled providers, advancing them a per person per month payment rather than reimbursing them on a fee-for-service basis.

OneCare is at the center of a multi-year experiment called "the all-payer model," which is enabled by a unique agreement between the Agency of Human Services, the Green Mountain Care Board, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. In Addition, OneCare must monitor the quality of care delivered by its providers and support them with enhanced care coordination of patients with significant health needs.

Some advocates are concerned by the heavy investment that the State is making in a private company - OneCareVermont - using public funds.

In an interview with VTDigger, Susan Aranoff, Senior Planner and Policy Analyst to the [Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council](#) said, "To date, the [Vermont Department of Health Access](#) has given delivery system reform funds only to OneCare, even though community-based organizations such as designated agencies are eligible to receive these funds as well."

The Green Mountain Care Board has extended their [request for comments to Friday, December 14th](#), and will vote on OneCare's budget proposal on Monday, December 17th.

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

VERMONT DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL AWARDED \$116,200 TO SERVE VERMONTERS

Every year VTDDC presents grant money to organizations that support Vermonters with disabilities and their family members. At December's Quarterly Meeting **Council members voted to support the following organizations ...**

- The [Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights](#) was awarded \$8,700 to host Disability Awareness Day - a day where over 300+ self-advocates, family members, and allies come together to celebrate diversity and disability in the State House. The Coalition was also awarded \$37,500 to fund a Coordinator.
- The [Green Mountain Self-Advocates](#) was awarded \$45,000 to support activities within their core mission, such as advocacy, peers supporting peers, and public education. They were also awarded \$15,000 for their new "People Planning

Together" project.

... and fund a project In-House ...

- The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council will contract with the [Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates](#) for a pilot project. The project will train special education law to family members and an attorney for up to \$10,000.



Information that's GOOD TO KNOW from the Council

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities has premiered the first of many educational short videos. GOOD TO KNOW takes complex ideas and puts it into simple terms we can all understand.

Search [#goodtoknowVTDDC](#) for other videos in this series or watch from the playlist. **Thanks for watching!**

Disclaimer: You must be logged into Facebook to watch the video.



<https://www.facebook.com/VTDDC/videos/1152376741586610/>

Resources as mentioned in this educational short:

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council
<http://ddc.vermont.gov/>
1 (802) 828-1310
vtddc@vermont.gov

Vermont General Assembly
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/>

Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/.../staff-o.../sergeant-at-arms/>
1 (802) 828-2228
jmiller@leg.state.vt.us

Vermont Secretary of State
<https://www.sec.state.vt.us/>
1 (802) 828-2363
secretary@sec.state.vt.us

Questions? Comments?
Email us at vtddc@vermont.gov with the subject line "Good to Know".

WHAT'S UP, UNDER THE BIG DOME?

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

Vermont's 2019 Legislative Session begins on

January 8th.

Here are some important dates to know for this year:

- Disability Awareness Day is Wednesday, February 27th
- Autism Awareness Day is Wednesday April 10th.



Please plan to attend and please let us know if your organization is hosting an event at the Statehouse this year.

Contact VTDDC for more details at Susan.Aranoff@Vermont.gov



SAVE THE DATE for the next Quarterly Meeting

When: Thursday, March 28, 2018

Where: Capitol Plaza, Montpelier, 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.