



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 LEARNS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PAYMENT REFORM

The [Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council \(VTDDC\)](#) accepted an invitation from the Agency of Human Services to discuss changes to how Vermonters with disabilities receive services and funding.

On Tuesday, February 19, Council Members met at the Waterbury State Complex and/or joined by conference call to learn about Development Service (DS) Payment Reform. Self-advocates, family members, and professionals alike were present.

The Goal of payment reform is to be - "Transparent, effective, accountable and administrable payment model that aligns with Agency of Human Services' broader payment reform and health care reform goals."

Director of the [Division of Developmental Services](#), Clare McFadden, was the primary presenter along with support from the Commissioner of the [Division of Disability, Aging and Independent Living](#), Camille George. McFadden served on the Council from 2010 to 2017, and is an expert about Vermont's agencies, the services they provide, and the rules that guides them.

"We try to maximize the dollars that we have. Some of these changes that we're making may require additional State resources."

- Clare McFadden responding to concerns about funding

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss:

1. What is a payment model?
2. How services work currently.
3. What are appropriate payment rates?
4. What has been done thus far.
5. What we can expect.

Since the system that delivers DS payments has not been revised for 30 years, it does not reflect the volume of transactions involved in serving more than 3,000 individuals.

The Council intends to write a response and a plan of action based on what was presented.



The Council's biggest concern about Developmental Services in Vermont is the subjectivity involved when assigning

For more information about DS Payment Reform [read the Presentation by Clare McFadden that was presented to the Council.](#)

budgets as well as the systems inability to serve some moderate need individuals. Council member and parent, Terry Holden, describes it as "being at the mercy of where you live."



LEGISLATORS AND ADVOCATES AIM TO CRACK DOWN ON SHADY AUTO DEALS

A new bill proposes stronger protections for car shoppers so that they're not misled about credit, affordability, and the size of their monthly payments.

Through out the previous year the [Vermont Legal Aid](#) has filed an increasing number of complaints on the behalf of consumers who say they're victims of sales fraud.

Complaints stem from when when car shoppers accept help filing their loan paperwork. Auto salesmen may misrepresent the buyer by listing an incorrect income or credit score. There are two outcomes - either the buyer takes the keys, drives home, and is later called by the dealer who says "The loan didn't go through." Or they take the keys, drive home, and later receive a bill from the loan company asking for a payment they can't afford. With a car they don't legally own the only two options buyers have are returning the car or paying the loan with larger payments and a higher interest rate.

People who experience this type of fraud are often marked as "easy targets" because they live under the poverty line.

Legislation spearheaded by Becca Balint will help buyers by:

- Capping the "document filing fee" at \$150.
- Requiring the consumer receive copies of loan applications before they're filed.

The Vermont Auto Dealers association says it has not received reports of the fraud described.

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

Consumers may visit the [Attorney Generals' website](#) for information about [buying a car](#) and Vermont [vehicle sales and services](#).

You can also [research the history of any car](#) as long as you know the VIN #.



VERMONT POLICY MAKERS WANT TO SAVE LIVES WITH AFFORDABLE MEDICATIONS

Washington delegates who represent Vermont all seem to share the same message - make medication affordable so that people can live.

According to an [article by the Washington Post](#), American's with diabetes are suffering. The cost of their medication is so high that they often have to choose between necessities like rent and food vs the very medication that keeps them alive. Some Americans have died from trying to ration their insulin. While this story is specific to people with diabetes, people who rely on other types of medication to stay alive are facing the same dilemma.

Around this time last year CNN reported that [3.2 million American's were uninsured](#) - that's the amount of people

who had to pay for their medication out of pocket.

A bill sponsored by Vermont State [Representative Peter Welch](#) aims to [combat the expensive cost of insulin](#) that's produced in the United States by allowing people to import safe alternatives from Canada. It also asks the Food and Drug Administration to consider other sources to import from as well.

Meanwhile, [Senator Bernie Sanders](#) and colleagues have introduced several bills to control the [price of prescription drugs](#), [drugs covered by Medicare](#), and the [safe importation of prescription drugs](#). [Senator Patrick Leahy](#) wants [insurance companies to be held to the same pricing and trading standards](#) as other for-profit companies and to [deter large pharmaceutical companies from blocking](#) the production and sale of affordable alternatives.

For more information about legislation and the price of medication, amendments, and which policy makers supports these bills, click the links within the article and consider checking them periodically for changes.

WHAT'S UP, UNDER THE BIG DOME?

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



The House Appropriations Committee held a hearing on the Governor's proposed 2020 budget on Wednesday, February 20th. The Hearing focused on the Agency of Human Services budget and over 30 Human Services Advocates testified. Susan Aranoff testified on behalf of the Council and was joined at the podium by Council Member Mike Gruteke of Derby, VT.

Disability Awareness Day is tomorrow (Wednesday, February 27th). Come for the full day or [browse the agenda](#) and pick the time that works best for you. We can't wait to see you there!

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.