



"Reaching out from the heart to people in need"

Main Office: 55 Joy Drive, South Burlington, VT 05403
Phone: (802) 658-6111 • Toll Free: 1-877-250-4099 • Fax: (802) 860-0451

Rutland Office: 1 Scale Avenue, Box 93, Building 3, Suite #209, Rutland, VT 05701
Phone: (802) 773-3379 • Toll Free: 1-800-851-8379 • Fax: (802) 773-7550

Counseling Services • Emergency Aid • Residential Care Homes • Parish Social Justice • Prison Ministry

Good evening. My name is Mary Beth Pinard, Executive Director of Vermont Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities is a statewide social services agency serving all Vermonters regardless of faith since 1929. We offer emergency aid, counseling services, and operate 4 Level III residential care homes located in Derby Line, Rutland and Burlington. Over 80% of the 160 residents we serve are on Medicaid. Our facility in Derby Line is one of the few Level III residential care homes in the Northeast Kingdom.

- I appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts on the Governor's Recommended 2022 State Budget.
- We respectfully request your committees consider adding an increase in the budget to the Medicaid reimbursement rate – specifically the Assistive Community Care Services (ACCS) program. A rate increase is not included in the Governor's budget and is necessary for residential care homes operated by Vermont Catholic Charities and others to continue to provide the extraordinary care and services to residents and to hire and retain high quality staff to care for our residents.
 - For our Homes, 87% of expenses are direct cost of care.
 - The current reimbursement does not cover 50% of our cost of care and costs continue to increase each year.
 - Impact of minimum wage: this year the minimum wage increased by 9% and next year it will increase by 7%.
 - In calendar year 2021, our health care premiums increased by 11.4%.
 - These increases without a Medicaid reimbursement rate increase will continue to widen the financial gap we face.
 - In an already tight labor market, long term care facilities continue to face staffing shortages in nursing and often cannot compete with marketplace wages.
- A few other key points:
 - Our Homes accept residents on Medicaid on day one. We do not require any days, months or years of private pay. Some facilities which are private pay only do not allow residents to stay once they move to Medicaid. We serve some of Vermont's most vulnerable who would have nowhere else to go to receive the care they need – nursing, nutrition, housekeeping, and community and social living.
 - Quote from a family member, "As everyone knows, it is not an easy decision to give over the care of a loved one to others. For us, it has been the best decision we have made. The care, compassion, respect and patience this staff has given my mother is something I cannot thank them enough for. The last few months have not been easy for anyone with COVID-19, but I know they have taken every possible step to keep her safe. Besides having to keep themselves and their families safe, they have stepped up to make sure my family has the peace of mind that mom is being cared for in the best possible way."
- As one of the oldest states in the nation with one of the highest life expectancy rates and lower than average median income, we anticipate the need for residential care will only increase for those on Medicaid. If we cannot continue to afford to provide this care, who will?