

H. 775 Testimony for House Government Operations Committee

February 13, 2020

Sara Chesbrough, Department of Health, Division of Maternal & Child Health, Adolescent Health Coordinator

Holly Morehouse, Vermont Afterschool, Executive Director

Cheryle Wilcox, Department of Mental Health, Interagency Planning Director

**tri-chairs of the Youth Services Advisory Council*

Background on Youth Services Advisory Council (YSAC)

YSAC was convened in the mid-2000s by the Agency of Human Services' Secretary's Office. The Council held youth focus groups to articulate the outcomes for the Council-which are still being used today.

YSAC was utilized on an ad hoc basis from the late 2000s until 2014, when the Vermont Department of Health's Vermont Youth Treatment Enhancement Project (VYTEP), funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), revitalized the network of providers and brought a focus to youth substance misuse prevention and treatment.

The members of this group felt strongly that YSAC should not be supported solely by grant-led initiatives and should have a holistic view on prevention of risk and promotion of protective factors for youth. When the VYTEP grant ended in 2018, the YSAC remained in place. Since 2018, YSAC has solidified membership, more clearly defined Operating Guidelines and a governance structure, and committed itself more firmly to the seven outcomes (seen on the next page under "how do we know we are making an impact") originally defined by youth in Vermont.

YSAC's Position on this bill

As an Advisory Council we support the implementation of this bill and are prepared to offer the assistance needed to ensure this Youth Council is representative of youth in Vermont.

This bill provides a key opportunity to elevate the voice of youth in Vermont. The most recent results from the [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) show that only 58% of high schoolers (down from 61% in 2017) feel valued in their community. This bill puts forth a positive and intentional way to increase the value of youth voice in Vermont. YSAC discussed this bill at the January 2020 meeting and the group all responded positively to the possibility of this bill moving forward. While the bill calls out 15 youth, these youth will also have the opportunity to talk to their peers and gather information to share back to the full council.

In the bill, the following is requested of the YSAC:

- With the Agency of Administration, assist in notifying the public regarding the opportunity for youth to serve on the council, solicit and accept applications for service, and appoint one youth member from each county and one statewide member
- Support the Youth Council
- In consultation with the AOA, provide the Youth Council training on general State policies and how to formulate policy proposals.

We are prepared to fulfill these requests. The YSAC is made up of a varied, diverse group of state and community providers who have deep respect and knowledge of youth and youth development.

H. 775 Testimony for House Government Operations Committee

February 13, 2020

Sara Chesbrough, Department of Health, Division of Maternal & Child Health, Adolescent Health Coordinator

Holly Morehouse, Vermont Afterschool, Executive Director

Cheryle Wilcox, Department of Mental Health, Interagency Planning Director

**tri-chairs of the Youth Services Advisory Council*



YOUTH SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

VISION

Youth thrive and feel hopeful, respected, empowered and connected to their communities.

MISSION

The Youth Services Advisory Council (YSAC) promotes shared responsibility across state and community stakeholders for achieving positive outcomes for youth and young adults in Vermont. The Council promotes, advocates for, and monitors the continued evolution of culturally competent, holistic, strengths-based service systems for Vermont's young people, advocates for improved quality of and access to these services, and organizes policy responses to remove barriers to achieving these goals.

WHO ARE WE AND WHAT WE DO

The Youth Services Advisory Council (YSAC) is made up of community and state partners who present an organized and unified voice for youth services by:

- Understanding and clarifying services and supports that make up the youth serving system
- Identifying gaps in services and making recommendations to bridge those gaps
- Increasing the skill of staff working with young people
- Leveraging funding opportunities
- Mapping and connecting to other groups providing youth services

HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING AN IMPACT?

The YSAC seeks to support better outcomes and increased resilience for youth, including:

- Increased job opportunities and levels of employment
- Increased positive relationships
- Increased mental health and decreased substance use
- Increased access to safe and stable housing
- Increased educational engagement, including post-secondary opportunities
- Decreased involvement in the justice system
- Increased access to health care

H. 775 Testimony for House Government Operations Committee

February 13, 2020

Sara Chesbrough, Department of Health, Division of Maternal & Child Health, Adolescent Health Coordinator

Holly Morehouse, Vermont Afterschool, Executive Director

Cheryle Wilcox, Department of Mental Health, Interagency Planning Director

**tri-chairs of the Youth Services Advisory Council*

Youth Services Advisory Council Membership

First	Last	Department/Division	Position
Adam	Sancic	Secretary's Office - Field Services Unit	Field Services Director, Middlebury/Rutland
Ariel	Carter	VDH/ADAP	Workforce Development Manager
Cheryle	Wilcox	DMH/Interagency Planning Director	DMH Interagency Planning Director
Helen	Beattie	Up for Learning	Executive Director
Holly	Morehouse	Vermont After School	Executive Director
Julia	Hampton		Health Program Specialist
JoEllen	Tarallo	Center for Health and Learning	Executive Director Post-Secondary Transition Coordinator
John	Spinney	AOE	
Karen	Price	Vermont Family Network	
Kathy	Griffin	ADAP Washington County Youth Services Bureau	School Based Prevention Executive Director
Kreig	Pinkham		
Leslie	Farrer	Spectrum Youth and Family Services	Clinical Director
Lisa	Maynes	Vermont Family Network	Juvenile Justice and Adolescent Services Director
Lindy	Boudreau	DCF/Family Services Division	
Lori	Uerz	VDH/ADAP	Prevention Manager
Martha	Frank	Vermont Family Network YIT/VT Fed. Of Families for Children's Mental Health	
Matt	Wolf		Young Adult Coordinatior
Kate	Luscomb	DVHA Centerpoint Adolescent Treatment Services	Quality and Clinical Integrity Unit Executive Director
Mitch	Barron		
Pam	McCarthy	Vermont Family Network	Executive Director
PJ	LaPerle	Student Assistance Program	Student Assistance Professional
Rose	Lucenti	DOL	WIOA Youth Program Manager
Sara	Chesbrough	VDH/Maternal Child Health	Program Coordinator
Song	Nguyen	VDH/Health Surveillance	Hep C Program Coordinator VocRehab Transition Program Director
Tara	Howe	DAIL/VocRehab Vermont Child Health Improvement Program	
Thomas	Delaney		VYTEP Evaluator
Tracy	Harris		Behavioral Supports in Schools