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Subject: New Opioid Treatment Facility to Open in St. Albans Area

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New Opioid Treatment Facility to Open in St. Albans Area

ST. ALBANS, VT – Gov. Peter Shumlin and Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD today announced that BAART Behavioral Health Services will open a new medication-assisted treatment center – or Hub – in the St. Albans area, expanding the Care Alliance for Opioid Addiction's Hub & Spoke system of care.

The new Hub will open by Jan. 1, 2017, offering comprehensive addiction and co-occurring mental health treatment services for residents of Franklin and Grand Isle counties with opioid use disorders. It is expected to serve at least 250 Vermonters in its first year of operation.

"Thanks to the great work of the Howard Center/Chittenden Clinic and partners, we've greatly expanded access to treatment and reduced the wait list in Chittenden County, but there's a clear need for more capacity in the northwest corner of the state," said Gov. Shumlin. "Six months ago, about 250 residents from Franklin or Grand Isle counties were having to travel to other areas of the state for help, or were on wait lists. This new facility will serve Vermonters in need, when they need it and where they need it."

The Care Alliance is a statewide partnership of treatment centers (Hubs) and clinicians (Spokes) that provides medication-assisted therapy, using methadone, buprenorphine or Vivitrol® (naltrexone) to Vermonters who are addicted to opioid drugs. The new treatment center will be the eighth regional facility to make up the Hub & Spoke system of care.

BAART already operates hubs in Berlin, St. Johnsbury and Newport, where wait lists are at zero or near-zero. Other hubs are located in Burlington, Rutland, Brattleboro and West Lebanon, New Hampshire.

"Addiction is a physical and psychological disease that must be treated and managed like any other chronic disease," said Dr. Chen. "The Care Alliance is designed to see that each person's care is effective, coordinated and supported, and this new facility will expand Hub capacity and complement the work of Northwestern Medical Center, the Howard Center, Northwestern Counseling & Support Services and the dedicated Spokes – the clinicians – in northwestern Vermont."

"BAART has been committed to helping Vermont meet the need for opiate treatment since 2005 when we started working in St. Johnsbury, and we are excited about being part of this new opportunity," said Jason Goguen, director of BAART Behavioral Health Services.

As a Hub, the new site will serve patients who have especially complex clinical needs. A physician, who can provide medication-assisted therapy, will supervise each patient's care. Some patients will be referred to a local physician who is part of the Blueprint for Health chronic care initiative. This physician leads a team of nurses and clinicians to treat patients with medication-assisted therapy using buprenorphine. Patients who need more intensive services may have their care coordinated by the Hub.

Each patient's care is supervised by a physician and supported by nurses and counselors who work to connect the patient with community-based support services. Depending on need, these services may include mental health and substance abuse treatment, pain management, life skills and family supports, job development and recovery supports.

Since January 2014, the total number of people served by Hubs has nearly doubled, now serving more than 3,000 patients, with fewer than 400 on the wait list statewide.

More health and public safety data and trends relating to the challenge of opioid addiction are available on the Health Department's website: www.healthvermont.gov/adap/dashboard/opioids.aspx

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