



**STATE OF VERMONT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
115 STATE STREET
MONTPELIER, VT
05633-5301**

May 10, 2022

Commissioner Emily Hawes
Department of Mental Health
280 State Drive
Waterbury, VT 05671

Dear Commissioner Hawes,

At the end of the previous legislation session, the House Committee on Health Care (Committee) sent a letter to the Secretaries of Education and of Human Services, as well as to the President and CEO of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, regarding the prolonged emergency department wait times for individuals experiencing mental health crisis. In that letter, the Committee requested that the Department provide ongoing weekly reports on the number of children and adults waiting in emergency departments and their lengths of stay, regardless of custody or health insurance status, including the hospitals in which children and adults are held or treated, whether or not a child is in the custody of the Department for Children and Families, and any other critical information regarding pressure on the mental health system. The letter further requested that the Committee be informed of action steps taken to alleviate pressure in the system.

Given the continued crisis in the mental health system and the new developments by the University of Vermont Health Network to discontinue planning for both the Central Vermont Medical Center inpatient unit and the University of Vermont Medical Center's children's unit, the Committee remains extremely concerned about the wait times for individuals in crisis. Consequently, the Committee requests that the Department continue to submit its ongoing weekly reports to the Committee and that it keep the Committee informed of the Department's action steps to address this crisis through the end of the calendar year.

The Committee appreciates the Department of Mental Health for its commitment to bringing this crisis to a close.

Sincerely,

Rep. William Lippert Jr., Chair
on behalf of the House Committee on Health Care