

To the House Healthcare Committee:

I am a resident of Vermont and a mental health care provider for children and families, and I oppose the creation of a new psychiatric facility in Middlesex.

As a provider of mental health services in a community mental health agency, I see the impact of psychiatric oppression every day, including the enforced chemical and physical restraint and seclusion of adults and children, the lack of effective alternatives to crisis response, and the overall embeddedness of psychiatric systems with carceral systems that are built on the imprisonment, control, and erasure of people with marginalized and multiple marginalized identities.

A recent and groundbreaking study in my town of Brattleboro showed the immensely negative impact of psychiatric oppression on Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and people who identify as LGBTQIA+, disabled, and psychiatrically labeled.

As a self-identifying person of color, I am adamantly opposed to projects like this, which continue to keep people down and disenfranchises marginalized identities. I oppose this project because it is a direct action towards "more of the same" and continues to drain resources away from the creation of new systems of health liberation.

If you choose to be committed to alternatives that uphold community health and wellbeing, I urge you to think creatively and look outside the framework of oppression, marginalization, and incarceration when considering alternatives.

Best,

Samia Abbass (she/her)
Children's Clinician
Brattleboro, VT