



**OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602

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**CONTACT: Andrew Gillespie**  
(802) 636-7047

**\*\*\*PUBLIC STATEMENT\*\*\***

**Statement of Lt. Governor Molly Gray on the Senate's Passage of S.197**

**Montpelier, Vt.** — This afternoon, Lt. Governor Molly Gray released the following statement in response to the Senate's passage of S.197, An act relating to the Coordinated Mental Health Crisis Working Group:

"I applaud Senate Health and Welfare Committee Chair, Senator Ginny Lyons, and the Vermont Senate, for their critical work to address the youth mental health crisis in Vermont. In November, I announced a [Recover Stronger Agenda for Vermont](#) urging the Vermont Legislature to take a number of steps to address the youth mental health crisis, including designating a task force inclusive of Vermont's mental health professionals to help identify the root-cause of the mental health crisis amongst young people. During a recent "[Seat at the Table](#)" panel discussion on Mental Health Care Access and Vermont's Youth, Pediatric Emergency Medicine Physician, Dr. Christian Pulcini said that the mean boarding time, for 293 children across the state of Vermont, was four days of waiting in the emergency department before being able to access needed mental health treatment.

S.197 is an important step in meeting the urgent mental health needs of Vermont's youth and is a necessary use of ESSER III Funds. I agree with national experts, Senator Lyons' work and this bill can serve as a national model in taking steps to meet the youth mental health crisis."

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