To: Nicole DiStasio, AHS Director of Federal Policy & Strategic Initiatives
From: Anore Horton, Executive Director, Hunger Free Vermont
Cc: Green Mountain United Way, United Way of Northwest VT, United Way Lamoille, Working Bridges, Parent Child Centers of VT, VT Community Action Partnership

July 15, 2026

Re: The Benefit Assisters Coalition is equipped to offer Medicaid and SNAP assistance and have longstanding relationships with the healthcare sector

We appreciate the opportunity to provide additional information to supplement the Coalition's previous proposal and further illustrate our capacity to support Vermonters through upcoming changes to Medicaid and SNAP.

As outlined in our initial submission, a number of organizations in this coalition have longstanding relationships with healthcare providers, and a number of organizations already have experience helping individuals and families navigate Medicaid enrollment, renewal, and retention, alongside other economic support programs.

Below you will find additional details about organizations within this Coalition and their existing partnerships with the healthcare sector, as well as their unique position in their communities to support the most vulnerable populations.

We remain strong in our position that coordination assistance with SNAP *and* Medicaid is critical to ensuring continuance of coverage, dignified access to programs, and efficient delivery of services. This will ease the burden and time placed on low-income people to go to multiple different sources for support for these two basic needs programs. These organisations are ready and eager to support individuals and households in accessing and maintaining their benefits to afford food and healthcare.

Thank you,
Anore Horton
Hunger Free Vermont
ahorton@hungerfreevt.org

Green Mountain United Way, United Way of Northwest VT, United Way Lamoille, Working Bridges
Contact: Tawnya Kristen, Executive Director, Green Mountain United Way
tkristen@gmunitedway.org
Connie Beal, Working Bridges Director, United Way Northwest Vermont,
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Clarissa French, Executive Director, United Way Lamoille County,
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Working Bridges is uniquely positioned to serve as a pathway to support because of where our program currently operates and the depth of our partnerships across Vermont's health care system.

Currently, Working Bridges provides on-site Resource Coordination at Northern Counties Health Care (FQHC), Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, Northwestern Medical Center, Central Vermont Medical Center, UVM Medical Center, Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice, and additional financial coaching services through UVM Health. These partnerships allow us to work directly with executive leadership, Human Resources teams, managers, and the patient-facing workforce who experience firsthand the barriers that impact both employee well-being and patient care.

Beyond our trusted presence in workplaces, Green Mountain United Way and United Way Northwest Vermont maintain leadership roles within Vermont's health care system through board representation, including seats on the Central Vermont Medical Center Board of Trustees and the UVM Medical Center Board. These relationships provide an additional avenue to engage health care leadership, inform system-level decision making, and align strategies across organizations.

This combination of embedded workplace programming and trusted executive-level partnerships creates a unique opportunity to accelerate the implementation of initiatives that address AHS priorities. It enables the Working Bridges Alliance not only to deliver direct employee support but also to leverage our relationships to bring training, education, and systems-level conversations directly to health care organizations. Our ability to engage both frontline staff and organizational leadership is a significant strength that we believe should be recognized as an important asset in addressing the identified gaps.

(United Way Lamoille County) - Clarissa French
United Way Lamoille County is not a stranger to rapid response resource coordination or working with our partners in health care. In addition to being a member of the Working Bridges Alliance, UWLC is a current member of the Lamoille Health Collaborative. LHC includes members from across health and human services, including our local FQHC, Lamoille Health Partners. UWLC attends Community Health Team meetings. UWLC piloted the Mobile Rural Resource Navigator position working closely with both health and human service organizations to support clients with a variety of needs, including Medicaid and insurance assistance. UWLC is poised, along with the other organizations listed here, to rapidly deploy trained individuals to support Lamoille County residents through the upcoming changes.

(United Way of Northwest Vermont Addition) - Connie Beal
Working Bridges Resource Coordinators help employees identify and access healthcare resources every day by building relationships with local providers and support organizations, including federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), hospitals, rehabilitative care providers, substance use treatment services, caregiver support programs, mental health organizations, and many others. Employees' healthcare needs are diverse, complex, and constantly evolving.

While our United Ways and the Working Bridges program benefits from strong executive-level partnerships with health networks, hospitals, and mental health organizations, it is equally important that Resource Coordinators maintain day-to-day relationships with frontline healthcare providers and community-based services. These local connections ensure that employees receive timely, personalized referrals and support overcoming barriers.

As Working Bridges Director, I also serve as Chair of the Board of All Brains Belong, a healthcare clinic in Montpelier, Vermont. Although it is not an FQHC, it provides essential primary care services for neurodivergent Vermonters and demonstrates the importance of diverse healthcare partnerships beyond traditional healthcare systems.

Healthcare organizations are experts in delivering healthcare services; however, it is my experience that they do not always have the capacity or expertise to assist individuals with health benefits or related social and economic challenges. Healthcare resources, eligibility requirements, and available programs change frequently. What is most valuable to employees is having a trusted, knowledgeable person who can consistently navigate these changes and connect them to the right resources based on their individual needs and circumstances.

Connecting Cultures - NESTT (New England Survivors of Torture and Trauma)
Contact: Rosalie Wright-Lapin, Program Director: Rosalie.Wright-Lapin@uvm.edu

Connecting Cultures-New England Survivors of Torture and Trauma has specialized skills to serve niche populations, and has personal relationships with clients. Supporting clients with Medicaid and SNAP applications is something our organization has decades of existing experience in, and is well-equipped to do.

When clients have had to go elsewhere for support navigating the healthcare system, we find that the lack of expertise around working across cultures and languages, combined with a lack of personal relationships, comfort and trust, results in our clients not receiving the support they need.

SNAP and Medicaid applications come with a tremendous amount of mail and follow-up work that needs to be responded to/acted on within a narrow timeframe. This means clients need help interpreting mail (which is always in English) and understanding what steps they need to take. The one page inserts that explain to clients how to call and request an interpreter is not sufficient to overcome the language barrier for a variety of reasons, including the fact that many individuals are illiterate or have low literacy skills.

For our many clients who do not have the language or literacy skills to navigate the system, they need extra support in this area, and very few organizations are situated to provide the level of support that is needed for these households to retain their benefits. Connecting Cultures-NESTT has the existing practice of working closely with and following up on households, often meeting them where they’re at to provide trusted support.

This is the kind of commitment our organization is making to clients, which is often overlooked. If it weren't for these practices, the most marginalized individuals who arguably need these benefits most would and will continue to be left out of accessing programs they are eligible for. Not only are our community members missing out if we aren't able to expand our services, but the state will lose money because a lot of people will just lose benefits altogether.

Vermont Parent Child Center Network
Contact: Ellen Amstutz, Director ellen@VPCCN.org
Statewide:15 Parent Child Centers- 1 PCC in every county and 3 in Chittenden
https://vtparentchildcenternetwork.org/

The Parent Child Center Network has a long standing history of collaborating with regional Blueprint teams and Accountable Communities for Health. We have established relationships with medical providers across the state. We provide case managers in several pediatric practices across the state through DULCE. The majority of us are Medicaid providers and bill Medicaid directly for services provided through Children's Integrated Services (CIS), as well as other fee for service medicaid eligible programs, is: Parents As Teachers (PAT) and Family Supportive Housing (FSH).

We have leadership representatives as each of our regional community health care provider tables and team within each region around reducing social determinants of health. This history positions us perfectly to be able to support families with children in applying for and/or renewing their Medicaid. A significant percent of the population we work with statewide are food insecure and financially and medically vulnerable and engage in mental health services & substance abuse treatment. We work with thousands of families across the state that are eligible and receiving child development and early intervention services, which is medicaid billable. As part of our regular practice we provide outreach to families and medical providers around maternal/family health and connect with families both pre-natally and post-partum.

A core service of PCCs is provision of Concrete Supports. Through this service all families are routinely screened for eligibility for food programs and health coverage. PCC staff provide assistance with applications, and help parents understand and respond to the notices they receive.

This past year PCCs served over 20,000 families and 23,000 children. Through our network of 15 Centers we reach all regions of Vermont. When parents can't travel to our Centers we reach them in their homes and places in their communities.

PCCs are hubs for a range of other State programs. Six PCCs are the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (child care subsidy) providers, 9 are the Children's Integrated Services Fiscal Agents, and 4 provide Family Supported Housing for homeless/at risk families. PCCs serve Vermont's most economically vulnerable population are well positioned to serve as Benefit Assistors.

Vermont Community Action Partnership
Jan Demers, VCAP Coordinator, jandemers@cvoeo.org
Incorporated in 1978, the Vermont Community Action Partnership (VCAP) is the state association for Vermont's five Community Action Agencies. These Agencies operate through federal, state and private funding to provide programs and services to Vermonters with low or moderate income. We continue to work hand and hand with the Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity and the Vermont Legislature.

Through our strong partnership with federal, state agencies, community based organizations and other mission minded partnerships, we work to address the causes and the conditions of poverty in Vermont.

On the front line of poverty, through short and long term strategies, VCAP and the Vermont Community Action Agencies are recognized leaders in providing individuals, families and communities with the tools, skills and vision for needed economic, racial, social and environmental justice. We served 44,614 Vermonters in 2025 in accessing support, including food, housing, and healthcare services.

BROC Community Action - Vicki Loomis
Capstone Community Action - Alison Calderara
CVOEO - Paul Dragon
NEKCA - Jenna O'Farrell
SEVCA - Joshua Davis