

Theresa Utton

Subject: FW: Please consider Youth in Transition

Date: Tue, 12 Aug 2014 10:57:15 -0400

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Dear Senator Kitchel,

I am writing today to express my concern for pending cuts to the Youth In Transition funding approved for this fiscal year.

This program is not a pilot one to find out if it has good outcomes, cost savings and improves the lives of young adults in Vermont. It is a proven program. Although, this age group is often seen as a difficult population, through the 6-year Youth in Transition grant we have seen the life direction of many youth/young adults change dramatically for the better. This youth work has significantly reduced: Young adult involvement with criminal behavior and Dept of corrections, use of prescription opiates and other illegal drugs, and the need for treatment for depression and other mental health conditions.

A conservative estimate of the 1 year cost savings is \$908,603. Another concern with cutting funding to this program is that we will lose key people, and we know keeping good workers, who create those trusting relationships, are the strength of this program.

One Young Adult said these services and the workers who provide them give young adults "hope for the future." The services teach critical life skills and connect young adults to needed services. They also provide peer outreach, which draws young people in, empowers them to be an advisory voice to the System of Care and to their communities, and gives them opportunity to give back to their communities.

Thank you,

Kathy

Kathleen Holsopple

Executive Director, VFFCMH

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