

Project Topic

An examination of the effects of homelessness on both the overall health of an individuals/families, as well as the health status of a rural community such as Addison County, Vermont, including observations and specific recommendations for UVMHN Porter Medical Center to address this issue as part of its overall Population Health Strategy.

Questions to be explored

- What does the issue of homelessness look like in Addison County from a community perspective based on the experience of those who deal with this issue regularly?
- Who is affected and how?
- What are the most prevalent reasons for an individual or family to experience homelessness?
- Is the problem growing or improving?
- What services exist, who provides them (private vs. government/municipal) and what do they offer?
- What are the barriers to access to these services for the homeless?
- How are these community services connected and is there strong collaboration among organizations addressing similar issues?
- Opportunities for improvement or better coordination?
- What does funding look like and where does it come from (private and government)?
- What are the public safety issues and how are they being addressed at a community level?
- What is Porter Population Health Strategy and how does it intersect with our homeless population?
- Are there other similar communities (in Vermont or elsewhere) that are addressing this issue more successfully and how? Could these lessons be applied here?

(People to be Interviewed)

What is the Porter Population Health Strategy?

- Sylvie Choiniere and Alison Wurst (Quality Department/PMC)
- Dr. Anna Benvenuto, Chief Medical Officer

Homelessness in Addison County and Community Services

- Doug Sinclair, Samantha Kachmar (Co-Directors of the Charter House) and Dottie Neuberger (board member). (802) 989-8621. Also Jane Steele (volunteer)
- Kate Schirmer-Smith (kate@johngrahamshelter.org) and Peter Kellerman (peter@johngrahamshelter.org) Co-Directors of the John Graham Shelter in Vergennes
- Moira Cook, Middlebury District Office, Vermont Department of Health
- Rachel Cummings, Executive Director of the Counseling Service of Addison County
- Kerri Duquette-Hoffman, Executive Director of Women Safe (Middlebury)
- Helena VanVoorst, Executive Director, United Way of Addison County

- Jeanne Montross—HOPE (Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects) 388-3608, ext. 239

Role of Government

- Ruth Hardy, Vermont State Senator (Addison County)
- Tom Hanley, Middlebury Police Chief
- Kathleen Ramsey, Middlebury Town Manager
- Laura Asermily, Chairwoman of public safety, Middlebury

Project Deliverables:

- A brief essay at the conclusion of weeks 1-3 summarizing findings from that week;
- A power point presentation at the conclusion of the month summarizing findings, observations and recommendations for Porter;

From: Ruth Hardy [mailto:RHardy@leg.state.vt.us]
Sent: Saturday, January 04, 2020 9:36 PM
To: Hallman, Ron; kramsay@townofmiddlebury.org; Thomas Hanley; kd@womensafe.net; Cook, Moira (Moira.Cook@vermont.gov); Rachel Lee Cummings; kate@johngrahmshelter.org; peter@johngrahmshelter.org; Wurst, Alison; Choiniere, Sylvie; charterhouseinformation@gmail.com; jmontross@hope-vt.org; helena@unitedwayaddisoncounty.org
Cc: Mass, Hanna
Subject: Re: Homelessness in Addison County Project and Request for Interview

Hi Ron,
Thanks for the heads up. I'll be back up in Montpelier starting Monday, but happy to find a time over a weekend to speak with Hanna in person or a moment between meetings to chat via phone.

Hanna - please feel free to email me, or reach me on my cell phone at 802-989-5278. Good luck with your project. It's an important topic to explore for our community.

My best,
Ruth

Ruth Hardy
Vermont State Senator, Addison District
PO Box 343 | East Middlebury, VT 05740
(802)989-5278 | rhardy@leg.state.vt.us

From: Hallman, Ron <RHallman@portermedical.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 2, 2020 10:08 AM
To: Ruth Hardy <RHardy@leg.state.vt.us>; kramsay@townofmiddlebury.org <kramsay@townofmiddlebury.org>; thanley@middleburypolice.org <thanley@middleburypolice.org>; kd@womensafe.net <kd@womensafe.net>; Cook, Moira (Moira.Cook@vermont.gov) <Moira.Cook@vermont.gov>; Rachel Lee Cummings <rcummings@csac-vt.org>; kate@johngrahmshelter.org <kate@johngrahmshelter.org>; peter@johngrahmshelter.org <peter@johngrahmshelter.org>; Wurst, Alison <awurst@portermedical.org>; Choiniere, Sylvie <schoiniere@portermedical.org>; charterhouseinformation@gmail.com <charterhouseinformation@gmail.com>; jmontross@hope-vt.org <jmontross@hope-vt.org>; helena@unitedwayaddisoncounty.org <helena@unitedwayaddisoncounty.org>
Cc: Mass, Hanna <hmass@middlebury.edu>; Hallman, Ron <RHallman@portermedical.org>
Subject: Homelessness in Addison County Project and Request for Interview

Good morning (and Happy New Year),

UVM Health Network Porter Medical Center is hosting/sponsoring a project to explore the issue of *Homelessness In Addison County* as part of Dr. Jessica Holmes' "Health Policy in Action" January term class. The student involved in this project is Hanna Mass, who is copied on this email.

I am writing to "introduce you" to Hanna and ask that you consider talking with her during the month of January at a mutually convenient date/time/location so that you can share your expertise and

experience with this timely and important topic. I am attaching Hanna's resume (fyi) as well as a one-page outline of the project with more details.

Hanna will be in touch with you starting next week to try and schedule a brief interview, so I wanted you to be aware of who she is and what she is doing.

Your help and support of her project will be deeply appreciated by us and by her!

Thank you in advance—

Ron

Ronald G. Hallman
Vice President, Communications and Engagement
UVM Health Network/Porter Medical Center
115 Porter Drive
Middlebury, VT 05753

802.388.4744

HANNA MASS

MC Box 3809, Middlebury, VT 05753
(970) 618-4235 hmass@middlebury.edu

EDUCATION

Middlebury College, Middlebury VT

Candidate for Bachelor of Arts: Neuroscience

May 2021

GPA: 3.79/4.00; College Scholar (highest academic honor) all semesters

Relevant Coursework: *Introductory Biology's, General and Organic Chemistry, Calculus I, Newtonian Physics, Introduction to Psychology, Psychological Statistics, Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience, Behavioral Neuroscience*

Athletics: Middlebury Club Sailing Team, Summer Sailing Instructor (Colorado)

Activities: Pre-Health Society, note taker, Snow Stars Mentor (Empowering girls through sports)

Language Skills: Intermediate oral proficiency in German

EXPERIENCE

Sana Herzchirurgie Stuttgart, Stuttgart Germany

Summer 2019

Summer Clinical Intern in Cardiac Clinic

- Supported clinical team with physical examinations, blood draws and basic patient care standards
- Observed numerous cardiac procedures, echocardiography, learned basic EKG and chest X-ray interpretations
- English language reviewer for systematic review of Souvenaid on Alzheimer's (publication pending)

Middlebury College Ski Patrol, Middlebury VT

Fall 2017 – Present

Volunteer Professional Ski Patrol

- Successfully completed the Outdoor Emergency Certification (OEC) course and was selected from highly competitive applicant pool
- Dedicate 12 hours per week to patrolling at the Middlebury Snowbowl. Respond to and assess/manage all accidents on the hill and maintain general mountain safety
- Mentor and teach OEC class for 30 new recruits each Fall

Aspen Valley Hospital, Aspen CO

Summer 2018

Clinical Shadow

- Shadowed Dr. Pernell's orthopedic clinic weekly and gained valuable medical experience

Green Mountain Care Board, Middlebury VT

Fall 2018

- Brainstormed and presented ideas to help the Green Mountain Care Board create a new Health Resource Allocation plan for Vermont, focusing specifically on underutilization

Dancing Bear Aspen, Aspen CO

2016-2019

Club Assistant

- Customer service professional accommodating all guest's requests

Leadership

Middview Leader, Middlebury VT

Fall 2018/19

First Year orientation trip leader and intern

- Selected to lead incoming first years on backpacking trips around New England and continue to mentor them throughout the year. Completed Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification during training.
- Selected for the logistical crew to help plan/execute itineraries and details for 50+ trips.

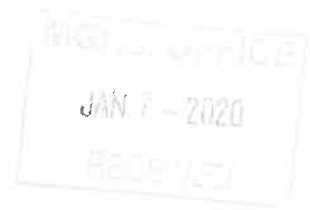
Minister of Special Events, Middlebury VT

Spring 2018 – Present

Sailing Team Board Member

- Selected to plan and organize team fundraising events as well as spring training trip.

To: Kathleen Ramsay, Middlebury Selectboard
From: Randy Kritkauskay and Carolyn Schmidt
Date: January 2, 2020
Subject: Progress on Homelessness and next steps



We were pleased to read the Addison Independent and see that progress is being made toward hiring a screener for Addison County. It is also encouraging to see that the town is looking to solutions that others in Vermont are employing.

We both remain concerned on two levels however. First, our letter to the town about forming a task force on homelessness remains unanswered. Second, we believe that the potential benefits of a task force are not fully understood.

Quite simply, having a screening mechanism for some homeless individuals and assisting them in gaining access to support and rehabilitation services is *only a partial solution*. This step will reduce pressure on the Middlebury Police Department and help the homeless. But it will only incrementally impact the volatile social environment developing in the town center, on its streets and in its stores.

Since our most recent letter to the editor in the Addison Independent we have received positive feedback and support via email and in Christmas card messages. From this feedback, we have learned of the ongoing daily encounters business owners and individuals walking the streets are having with troubled homeless individuals. This situation is volatile (as we explain below). We have also learned about the desire of members of the community to be better informed about, and more involved with, the complexity of homeless issues Middlebury and Addison County face.

We applaud your consideration of a "Community Outreach Team" and "Street Outreach Team". We have seen such mechanisms at work on the streets of Montreal with rapid intervention teams stepping in to de-escalate conflicts that would otherwise involve the police and without being quickly and visibly addressed would un-nerve a concerned citizenry.

Currently, there appear to be no plans providing for downtown business owners and residents who routinely interact with homeless people to easily and quickly get in touch with a Community Outreach Team or Street Outreach. The same holds true for lack of means for contacting those operating shelters and other services for the homeless. Without such a communications channel critical interventions can lead to avoidable confrontations.

To be specific, when we or our tenants find evidence of alcohol use at Charter House (bottles tossed over the fence separating our properties), or we see residents free-basing on the front porch of Charter House, or we see an obviously mentally disturbed individual pulling a suitcase headed toward Charter House violently assaulting and swearing at a fence in the parking lot of the Middlebury Inn, or we have direct knowledge of an individual with a history of violent unprovoked assault checking into Charter House (all real life examples) we currently have no means of providing important and actionable information to either Charter House or to an appropriate social service provider.

Several years ago, we tried to establish a "Neighborhood Advisory Group" with Charter House to provide such a communication feedback channel but the suggestion was refused. We are *not* seeking to interfere with Charter House or other organizations providing services to homeless individuals. We are trying to act on the wisdom that it takes a village to address such problems. Neighbors and those on the

streets are the eyes and ears of our community, often seeing what staff do not see. As critical stakeholders, we need to be an engaged part of any solution. We should be involved in planning for the homeless at its early stages. And we should be involved in program implementation going forward. This sentiment has been expressed to us by several Middlebury business owners.

A cautionary tale – Across the street from our more rural home in Whiting is a “respite home” operated by Specialized Community Care under contract with the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL). On October 4th 2019 one of the temporary residents walked out the front door, vandalized the car of her caretaker/monitor, walked down the street to a neighbor’s house and vandalized his car. She then knocked on his door and when he answered she barged into his house, assaulted him by battering his face, bit his arms, bloodied his living room floor, tore the TV off the wall, and then entered his study where she trashed his computer. It was nearly half an hour before the state police arrived and helped to subdue the attacker.

Our Whiting neighborhood did not demand that the facility be closed. We responded by requesting and having a meeting with SCC and DAIL to discuss what went wrong and what can be done to prevent such incidents in the future. It was astounding to see the collective wisdom, understanding, and pro-active problem solving creativity in the room during our community input meeting. The outcomes: 1) Preventative Action- an agreement by the service provider, SCC, to better screen residents so that known and likely violent residents are not located so far from quick intervention by the state police, 2) Continuing Community Involvement- We developed procedures for neighbors to call SCC contact people, whose names and cell numbers we now have, when we see behaviors that require immediate attention. We also have contact numbers for DAIL when state oversight and intervention is called for. We are now partners in the operation of the facility. Residents and neighbors will be better served.

Moral of the story: pro-actively involve the neighborhood stakeholders and allow public feedback continually. It takes a village, more than a screener, more than a Community Action Team.

Please re-consider our request for a Community Task Force on Homelessness. Waiting until after an unfortunate incident such as we have experienced in Whiting may find the Town of Middlebury dealing with a tragedy that polarizes and reduces the likelihood of humane problem solving. This unfortunate trend is occurring across the nation. We don’t want to be part of it.

Awaiting your response

Randy Kritkauskay and Carolyn Schmidt, owners 29 North Pleasant St, Middlebury residents of 278 North Road, Whiting, Tel 802 623 8075, rkritkauskay@ecologia.org, cschmidt@ecologia.org

Initials	Interventions 2018	Interventions 2019	Notes
H.M.	0	16	Migrant into Midd June 2019
C.L.	9	33	Migrant into Midd 2017
R.T.	0	6	Migrant to Midd 2019
M.B.	1	34	Migrant to Midd late 2018
D.M.	1	21	
R.R.	18	19	Homeless Record to 2017
A.L.	3	42	Migrant to Midd 2018
B.E.	21	16	Multi-year conduct issues
A.C.	0	2	
S.C.	0	8	Migrant to Midd late 2019, 46 interventions in Chittenden Cty 2019
R.F.	13	18	Primarily mental health
A.V.	0	17	
S.R.	0	2	
L.M.	7	17	Migrant to Midd Apr 2018
M.E.	0	5	In Midd May 19- Sept 19
H.S.	4	13	
TOTAL FOR 16 HOMELESS	77 Interventions 2018	269 Interventions 2019	

This table represents active police interventions for a *sampling* of the homeless population in Middlebury. Interventions occur when the police must intervene and take action due to inebriation, fighting, disorderly conduct, trespass, welfare checks, and mental health issues such as transport to CSAC or to Porter. This table does NOT include routine community caretaking functions or non-enforcement contacts such as litter cleanup or peacekeeping. Many of the homeless do not create a burden on police or diversion of resources, this is just a sampling of 16 known homeless.

The following data generally follows and is related to the increase in homeless activity:

Calls to the Charter House:

2017- 5 2018-15 2019 25

Mental health calls: (calls classified as “mental health” involve no other related call, such as disorderly conduct. This is strictly non-criminal activity involving a patient in crisis that requires mental health intervention. These calls normally require 2 officers for several hours at a time until the issue is stabilized.

2017-46 2018 – 54 2019 -74

Inebriates – persons taken into protective custody.

2017- 28 2018-38 2019 – 50

Disorderly Conduct

2017- 47 2018- 47 2019- 65

Assaults

2017- 9 2018-20 2019-27

On January 1, 2020 at 2:24 PM Ruth Hardy <RHardy@leg.state.vt.us> wrote:

Hi Tom,

Thanks for sending this along. I'll forward it to the group I sent the previous email to. It does appear that such calls are increasing, underscoring the need to work collaboratively with the relevant agencies in town - CSAC, Porter, WomenSafe, etc. to find a solution for Middlebury. We'll be working on housing, mental health, and drug use treatment issues again this session in Montpelier, I'm sure. Let's keep in touch to see how we can work together on addressing these issues. Until then, Happy New Year!

My best,

Ruth

Ruth Hardy

Vermont State Senator, Addison District
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