

# NORTHWEST + CENTRAL VT PREVENTION NETWORK

## MEETING NOTES

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### Meeting Goal

Providing an opportunity for people and organizations across Northwest and Central Vermont to come together to share information, make connections, and explore opportunities related to prevention of substance misuse and promoting wellbeing in our communities.

### Welcome & Agenda Overview

#### Agenda:

Prevention Updates

Backbone Updates

Presentation from Merisah Trisciuzzi, second year medical student at the University of Vermont, on older adults and cannabis (UVM Public Health Project)

Funding Update

Wrap-Up

### Prevention Partner Updates

**Marianna Cleary, Mosaic VT:** There will be a Prevention Summit on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 9am – 1pm at the North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier. The goal is to get people who work in prevention connected, look at YRBS data, and have conversations about how to meet the needs of the community. [Register here.](#)

**Nick Tatakis, PC:** Proposals for the VT Substance Use conference in May are due tomorrow. Conference is May 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> in South Burlington. [Here is the link for Proposals.](#)

**Beth Schrader, Prevention Works! VT:** There will be a [Conference](#) for school based prevention staff on May 7<sup>th</sup> at Lake Morey. [Register for the conference here.](#) PW!VT is also sponsoring a training on supervision of prevention professionals. [Register for the training here.](#)

**Amy Brewer:** The 2023 YRBS data is now available at the supervisory union level, and is posted on the [VDH website.](#)

**Mark Hughes, Richard Kemp Center:** RKC is still hosting chess on most Tuesdays, as well as a movie night on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. Would greatly appreciate folks getting the word out about these two events. RKC also started up a Jam Session for the community to come together. There is also a peer support group on the first Thursday of every month from 6pm – 8pm.

VT Racial Justice Alliance has a partner meeting on the third Thursday at the Richard Kemp Center. They also have a Truth & Justice series in partnership with the Fletcher Free Library, on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month from 5:30 – 7:00pm.

There is also started a Prevention Equity group that meets once a month. The next meeting is March 10<sup>th</sup> from 1 – 2:30pm. [Join the Zoom meeting.](#) Meeting ID: 841 3676 3046.

Passcode: 257021

**Holly Rossi, Dismas House:** Dismas is holding a Sauce Boss competition on March 15<sup>th</sup> and is in search of competitors. The contest will support a community spaghetti dinner, and will have a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Reach out to [Holly](#) for more information.

**Ali Dieng, Building Bright Futures:** Would like to share two data resources. [Vermont's Early Childhood Data Portal - Building Bright Futures.](#) This is a Year in Review for [Children in the State of VT.](#)

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## Backbone Updates

**Mahat:** Sharing an update on the Funding Process.

- **Before March 14<sup>th</sup>:** RFA released in the next month
- **April 11<sup>th</sup>:** Applications due
- **April 25<sup>th</sup>:** funding committee sends clarifying questions to applicants
- **May 9<sup>th</sup>:** applicant responses due back to FC
- **May 23<sup>rd</sup> – June 2<sup>nd</sup>:** FC reviewing and finalizing portfolio

**Camille:** We are currently updating our Prevention Inventory from 2022. We would greatly appreciate your time in filling this out so we can add or update your organization's information. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to fill out, and the goal is to gather information about organizations and individuals doing work in Northwest and Central VT (LPO Region 1). The current inventory is available on our website and is a way for people across Vermont to see the work being done by other partners across the region in prevention. You can fill out the survey [here](#). Check out the [current inventory](#) here.

## Presentation: UVM Public Health Project, Merisah Trisciuzzi

The students began with a **literature review** of the materials available for older Vermonters on cannabis use. The Literature Review showed that there are:

- Risks associated with cannabis use
- Gaps in cannabis use education
- A lack of data surrounding cannabis use

**Research Question:** To what extent are community service providers educating older Vermonters (65+) about cannabis use compared to other substances?

The students partnered with the United Way of Northwest VT to identify some community partners that they work with in obtaining data on what educational materials are out there for older Vermonters and use of cannabis.

They created a 7-question survey, which was kept vague specifically so that the answering organizations would hopefully share more information with them later. For the survey, 58 eligible organizations were contacted and 13 completed the survey.

### What they found:

- 0 organizations offered info on cannabis.
- Sites that distributed resources related to other substances were largely focused on providing basic needs or community services
- 75% of sites that had information on nicotine were interested in providing information on cannabis if it were available
- 100% of sites that provided information on alcohol and opioid use were interested in providing information on cannabis if it were made available
- 62% of organizations overall were interested in providing information if it were available to them
- Sites that were interested in educational materials wanted pamphlets as the main source

### Questions:

**Diana, Backbone Team:** What kinds of organizations were among the 13 that answered questions.

**Merisah:** The majority were community centers and libraries. We had some food shelves, homeless centers, and a senior living community

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**Stefani Hartsfield:** You've identified a real gap. It sounds like you didn't have a chance to talk with [SASH](#), and I will put the website in the chat. They collect data on older adult substance use and misuse.

**Megan Bridges, United Way of NWVT:** Dr. Carney is currently accepting applications for the fall semester, so I encourage people to apply.

**Bianka Cimrin, BPHC:** I think this information is incredible and thank you for such a great project. I table at Feeding Chittenden and pamphlets on cannabis use would be extremely valuable as a resource there.

**Mahat:** The second Vermont Language Justice Project video is currently being worked on and is going to focus on substance use in older Vermonters. Once it is made available, we will share it out with everyone.

## Funding Update

### Funding Committee: Draft Allocation Priorities

**Context:** The Funding Committee began work in early August and have gone through Data Review and Pre-planning. We are now rolling into the grant making phase. The committee is made up of 9 people from all 3 health districts (Barre, Burlington, and St. Albans)

Elements of funding committee process: **What do we need to know to establish priorities and draft an allocation plan?**

- Level 1: Understand how the funds can be used
- Level 2: understand the regulatory framework and guiding principles and values of the Region
- Level 3: define the unique role these general fund dollars play in funding prevention. Where and how does the proposed portfolio (supported by state general funds) fit within the constellation of funds already available for prevention?

After careful review of available data, the FC identifies ***three priority areas:***

1. Efforts that support youth, young adults, and/or seniors
2. Efforts that support one or more of the following priority populations: people who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color; people who identify as LGBTQIA+; people with limited financial means; refugees, immigrants, and people with limited English proficiency; individuals with disabilities; people who are or have experienced being unhoused; veterans; and people living in rural areas
3. Efforts that impact one or more of the following levels of the Vermont Prevention Model: Relationships, Organizations, Community, and Policies & Systems

**\*NOTE: Although the Funding Committee has established these areas as priorities, they will review and rank every eligible proposal received\***

**Questions for participants:**

1. **How/do these priorities reflect what you see in your community**
2. **What opportunities or challenges do you see within these priorities?**
3. **If it is not already identified, are there other areas you hoped these funds would or could support?**
4. **Other comments?**

**The Funding Committee will look at all of this before finalizing the allocation plan, and we will then report back. The finalized plan will go into the RFP.**

**Ali Dieng, BBF:** Is there a timeline of the grant itself? And how much resources will go to people who are applying?

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**Diana:** Timeline is in the chat. The number is 651,000\$ across the 3 health districts. The grant runs from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 - June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The Funding Committee is inclined to look at multi-year grants but have not exactly figured out how yet.

**Ali:** I am wondering about seniors and substance use prevention. Do you have data that backs the idea that there is an increase in substance use among seniors?

**Diana:** Yes, the committee looked at the data and there were concerns.

**Mariah, BPHC:** I am wondering if when the committee was looking at data to inform their decisions, were they able to use the most recent YRBS (and other types) of data? I also know that young women are experiencing substance use. Maybe targeted interventions at the middle school age are something to consider.

**Diana:** Good question, I can't answer that for sure. They looked at data in August/September, before the 2023 YRBS data was out, they are continuously looking at data.

**Jim:** I think these are great priorities and really exemplify the problem.

**Stefani:** The Youth Mental Health Connections call would review data every month, and female-identifying youth do seem to be at risk right now.

**Ali:** A priority could be the intersection between pregnant women, mental health, and substance use. When we talk about prevention, that population needs to be supported. I can send the full report to Mahat.

**Key Points:**

- Current YRBS data & the funding committee
- Female-identifying population in the Burlington health district
- Middle school youth and vaping

**Looking Ahead**

Next meeting: March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025

10:00am - 11:30am

**NEW MEETING LINK:** [Join the meeting now](#)

