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**Vermont Physicians Say Cliff in Funding  
Threatens Primary Care Sustainability**  
*Urge Sector-Wide Investment*

**Montpelier, VT** - Vermont physicians and primary care practice administrators spoke in the Vermont Statehouse today, urging lawmakers to include vital primary care investments in the State's FY26 Budget. These funds are necessary to help address the primary care funding cliff caused by the delayed start of the AHEAD health care reform model and to mitigate the primary care workforce shortage. The legislature has the opportunity to stabilize and invest in the future of primary care in Vermont through innovative workforce development initiatives and sufficient ongoing primary care payments.

"It's not possible for Vermont to make progress on reducing health care costs and improving quality without building a system of primary care, designed to ensure Vermonters are getting necessary screenings, managing chronic conditions and avoiding emergency department visits," said Jessa Barnard, Executive Director of the Vermont Medical Society. "Yet, rather than taking steps to strengthen primary care, there is a funding cliff facing primary care practices in 2026 that cannot be ignored. Vermont has signed an agreement to enter the AHEAD Model with Medicare starting in 2027 but our current All-Payer Model comes to an end in December 2025. We call on the legislature to address the gap in funding and programmatic holes that this creates for primary care practices in 2026 before we leave more Vermonters without a medical home."

"The Comprehensive Payment Reform (CPR) funding enabled investments in various programs including mental health initiatives and provided funding to retain and recruit practitioners and other medical support staff," said Jon Asselin, CPA, COO/CFO, Primary Care Health Partners. "In short, CPR preserved the existence of our practices as well as many other independent primary care practices. With the loss of CPR and with no other support on the horizon, we're faced with making tough decisions. While we endeavor to always provide the highest quality care possible, without funding, changes will be necessary. Programs will be eliminated, or worse yet, offices may need to close."

"As a private- practice community based pediatrician, Blueprint for Health supports,

including the Blueprint expansion for mental health services, practice payments, community support staff and DULCE are vital to our sustainability in providing quality healthcare for Vermont's most vulnerable rural populations, Tracy Tyson, MD, a pediatrician with Monarch Maples Pediatrics in St. Albans said. "These services address issues in our communities that directly impact children's chronic health and lead to healthier families and overall decreased healthcare costs."

"Primary care remains the cornerstone of good health, and it is presently at grave risk here and in Washington," said Michael Costa, CEO of Gifford Health Care. "Vermont's Legislature can and should take action to fill critical funding gaps and support emerging workforce programs, such as the Maple Mountain Consortium Primary Care Residency program."

"Vermont's primary care physician numbers are dropping at a time when we need primary care more than ever," said Melissa Volansky, MD, a family physician with Maple Mountain Consortium and Lamoille Health Partners. "Our rural citizens have higher rates of chronic disease, worse health outcomes, and lower access to care. The Maple Mountain Family Medicine Residency program is a solution. Training rural primary care physicians in small community health centers and nearby regional hospitals where they are most needed will immediately increase access to primary care for these communities and fill the pipeline for our rural healthcare workforce for years to come."

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**About the Vermont Medical Society:** The Vermont Medical Society is the leading voice of physicians in the state and is dedicated to optimizing the health of all Vermonters and the health care environment in which Vermont physicians and physician assistants practice medicine. The Society serves its 3,100 members through public policy advocacy on the state and federal levels, as well as by providing legal, administrative and educational support, producing a rich flow of news and information and offering member benefits that increase medical practice effectiveness and efficiency. For more information, visit [www.VTMD.org](http://www.VTMD.org).