



VERMONT PRACTITIONER HEALTH PROGRAM 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Vermont Practitioner Health Program Operations

Introduction

The Vermont Practitioner Health Program (VPH) is a health service of the Vermont Medical Society created for the benefit of Vermont's health professionals. Its purpose is to identify, assess, evaluate and ensure effective treatment for clinicians whose ability to practice medicine is impaired, or is at the risk of becoming impaired. Physicians (including M.D.s and D.O.s), podiatrists, medical trainees, radiology assistants, anesthesia assistants and physician assistants are eligible to participate. VPH assists practitioners dealing with impairment or risk of impairment due to use of drugs, including alcohol, as well as impairment caused by any factor that interferes with cognition, judgment or behavior. This includes mental health challenges and organic causes of cognitive impairment.

Finances

VPH receives partial financial support under a contract with the Vermont Board of Medical Practice (VBMP), based on legislation in 2000 that established funding of the program through a surcharge to Board of Medical Practice licensee's licensing fees. In 2017, the statute was amended to include any medical condition that has the potential to impair a licensee of the VBMP's ability to practice medicine. Funding through the VBMP also increased at that time. VPH receives further financial support from the VMS Faulkner Trust Fund, which provides for the health and wellbeing of physicians in the State of Vermont. In 2019, VPH received donations from the Medical Mutual Insurance Company of Maine, Coverys, the University of Vermont Medical Center's Captive Insurance Company and from the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. Any remaining operational deficit is paid for from the VMS general operating fund.

Program Staff

The Medical Director, Joseph Lasek, M.D., a psychiatrist with expertise, training and experience in substance abuse and mental health, oversees all clinical aspects of the program. Dr. Lasek assumed the VPH Medical Director position in July 2019. Dr. Lisa Lambert held the VPH Medical Director position from April 2018 to July 2019. Program Administrator, Colleen Magne, performs all day-to-day management functions for the program. Jessa Barnard, Executive Director of the Vermont Medical Society, provides strategic and legal oversight for the program and program staff.

VPH Committee

Currently an 8-member VPH Committee, approved by the VMS Council, serves in an advisory capacity to the Medical Director of VPH on clinical and program matters. The Committee is structured as a peer review committee with the accompanying legal protections of participants' confidentiality and includes eight

physicians who are knowledgeable about the impact that practitioner health matters have on health care. The Committee meets at least 10 times during the course of the calendar year.

Participating in VPHP

Anyone can contact VPHP with referrals, including practitioners who refer themselves. Referrals come from colleagues, family members, friends, hospitals, and the Board of Medical Practice. Inquiries to the phone lines are responded to promptly and efficiently. When an individual contacts VPHP about a practitioner or about himself/herself, the Medical Director assesses the situation and determines the next steps, which may include an inpatient or outpatient evaluation. The Medical Director also assists in guiding the referral source to other resources, if needed. Participation in VPHP is always voluntary. Participation is also confidential, unless the Board of Medical Practice is involved with the practitioner's case.

VPHP will strongly urge a practitioner who is experiencing impairment to get help, and the Medical Director will recommend specific evaluation and treatment options. If monitoring is recommended, practitioners are encouraged to enter a VPHP monitoring contract. The monitoring contract specifies a course of treatment and documents the progress of recovery. The standard contract may include individual therapy, group support meetings, and regular meetings with a designated VPHP peer support advisor (formerly known as case manager); random urine, hair, nail or breathalyzer testing; treatment with an addictionologist/psychiatrist; and the oversight of a practice monitor who interacts with the practitioner on a regular basis. RecoveryTrek provides administration for the testing of hair, blood and urine through Quest Diagnostics and United States Drug Testing Laboratories Inc. (USDTL). VPHP also utilizes the Soberlink breathalyzer system for participants that are diagnosed with alcohol dependence.

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of the Vermont Practitioner Health Program. VPHP recognizes the importance of respecting the privacy of those who come forward to seek help, and VPHP is committed to devoting its resources to protect that privacy. VPHP telephone and fax lines are confidential. Electronic mail is encrypted.

VPHP is a member of, and participates in, the Federation of State Physician Health Programs. FSPHP members participate in an email list serve, and attend regional and national conferences, all of which serve as a forum for advice, sharing of resources and input from other PHPs throughout the USA and Canada.

The Year in Review

The Vermont Practitioner Health Program has completed its nineteenth year of operation. The program continues to improve and develop high standards of identifying and supervising practitioners who are at risk of or currently have impairments to practice medicine. Calls to VPHP have increased and we believe that is due to outreach efforts by staff, VPHP Committee members and colleagues to promote awareness of the program and that the scope of the program has recently expanded.

In the fall of 2017, the Vermont Medical Society (VMS) received an amendment to the State of Vermont Department of Health Contract for services for the Vermont Practitioner Health Program. The amendment addressed expanding the program to include other medical conditions that may impair a practitioner's ability to practice medicine. The VMS received another amendment to the VDH contract in 2019 to extend the contract term to June 30, 2020. No other changes to the contract were amended at that time.

Program Participation January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019

VPHP recognition continues to grow in the state of Vermont and, with increased recognition, telephone inquiries to the program have grown as well. The confidential phone line is also used for providing information and to answer any questions regarding the program, including the availability of treatment facilities and monitoring options. When VPHP receives calls that relate to issues outside the scope of our program, we make every attempt to refer those professionals to other appropriate resources in the medical or counseling community.

The following provides a breakdown of types of new practitioner contacts handled during 2019:

- # Of intake assessments performed by VPHP: 13
- # Of referrals by the VBMP: 12
- # Of referrals by other means including self and transfers from other PHPs: 6
- # Of assessments/evaluations that resulted in a contract with VPHP: 3
- # Of participants contracted with VPHP in 2019: 19
- # Of participants that successfully completed monitoring in 2019: 2
- # Of dropouts or program failures: 0
- # Of professionals determined to be candidates for monitoring but refused: 0
- # Of reportable or non-reportable relapses by contracted professionals: 2
- # Of phone calls related to concerns about impairment in a practitioner: 32

2019 Outreach

Vermont Practitioner Health Program provided the following education and outreach to the medical community:

VPHP staff provided a lecture titled “Physicians at Risk, Substance Abuse, Depression and Suicide” to the first year students attending the Robert Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont, followed by small group meetings with physicians in recovery. Many VPHP Committee members along with past and present VPHP participants participate in small group sessions. This presentation provides students information on early intervention and referral, and the positive outcomes of treatment. The response from the students to these group meetings has been overwhelmingly positive.

Dr. Lambert and Ms. Magne participated in a dinner/lecture for the UVM First Year Residents in anesthesiology focused on substance abuse and the risk in anesthesiology. Dr. Lambert also emphasized VPHP as a resource for intervention, resources and monitoring. VPHP brochures were distributed.

Dr. Lambert, Ms. Barnard and Ms. Magne met with Dr. Krista Zehle, Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education from the Robert Larner College of Medicine to discuss how VPHP and the College can collaborate to offer support to the medical students. Brochures were also provided for distribution to the medical students.

Ms. Barnard incorporates information about VPHP and its expanded scope of services when she presents to any hospital medical staff. In 2019, Ms. Barnard presented to the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems Chief Medical Officer Group, and the medical staffs at UVMMC, Copley Hospital and Central Vermont Medical Center.

Dr. Lasek, Dr. Valentine, Ms. Barnard and Ms. Magne attended a monthly meeting of the VT Board of Medical Practice to introduce Dr. Lasek to the VBMP Board Members, provide an update on VPHP to the VBMP Board Members and distribute brochures and sample contracts. Dr. Lasek, Dr. Valentine, Ms. Barnard and Ms. Magne also met separately with the VPHP Liaison Committee members to discuss any areas of mutual concern.

Dr. Lasek and Ms. Magne annually give a VPHP update to Vermont Medical Society Council members and are available to provide presentations about the program to any of the state’s hospital or outpatient staff meetings.

2019 Case Management Committee Members

- Joseph Lasek, MD: VPHP Medical Director /Lisa Lambert, MD: Immediate Past Medical Director
- John Valentine, MD: Internal Medicine and Oncology, Roxbury, VT, Program Chair, Retired
- George Linton, MD: Geriatrics, Montgomery, VT, Retired
- Patrick Mahoney M.D., Orthopedic Surgeon, South Burlington, VT, Retired
- Richard Marasa, M.D., Emergency Medicine, Springfield, VT
- Stephen Payne MD: Surgery, St. Albans, VT
- Jeannie Prunty, MD: Neurology, Morrisville, VT
- Robert Venman, MD: Surgery, GP, MA Substance Abuse (Psych), Middlebury, VT, Retired

2019 VPHP Budget – Approved & Actual

	<u>Jan - Dec 19</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
4800 · VPHP-State of Vermont Contract	88,917.75	84,000.00
4810 · VPHP-Faulkner Fund	19,000.00	29,000.00
4820 · VPHP-Program Donations	<u>31,660.00</u>	<u>30,000.00</u>
Total Income	<u>139,577.75</u>	<u>143,000.00</u>
Gross Profit	139,577.75	143,000.00
Expense		
7000 · VPHP Expenses		
7010 · Accounting	1,550.00	1,500.00
7020 · Conference Calls	0.00	200.00
7030 · Copier	400.00	400.00
7040 · Council Committee Expenses	457.82	1,000.00
7065 · Meetings, Education	0.00	2,000.00
7070 · Postage	96.83	200.00
7080 · Printing Expense	266.76	300.00
7090 · Subscriptions & Dues	1,600.00	1,500.00
7110 · Supplies	491.82	400.00
7120 · Telephones/Cell Phone	886.23	1,200.00
7150 · T&E-AIR, Mileage, Taxi, Hotel	1,486.58	5,000.00
7160 · T&E-Meals	38.34	300.00
7210 · Personnel-Salary Expenses	60,700.00	60,700.00
7220 · Personnel-FICA Expense	1,200.00	1,200.00
7230 · Personnel-Pension Expense	4,600.00	4,600.00
7240 · Personnel-Unemployment Tax	400.00	400.00
7250 · Personnel-D&O Insurance	500.00	500.00
7260 · Personnel-Health & Dental Ins.	7,000.00	7,000.00
7310 · MD Contract	57,483.91	53,000.00
7320 · Website, Electronics, Computer	972.40	500.00
7370 · Workers Comp Insurance	400.00	400.00
7380 · Disability & Liability Insurance	152.80	3,000.00
7385 · Occupancy Expenses	<u>2,400.00</u>	<u>2,400.00</u>
Total 7000 · VPHP Expenses	<u>143,083.49</u>	<u>147,700.00</u>
Total Expense	<u>143,083.49</u>	<u>147,700.00</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-3,505.74</u>	<u>-4,700.00</u>
Net Income	<u>-3,505.74</u>	<u>-4,700.00</u>