

# Resources and Professional Development Needs and Recommendations for Vermont Substance Abuse Workforce Development 6/19/15

For Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs

By Center for Health and Learning

## Introduction

The Vermont Department of Health Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs (ADAP) is interested in identifying sustainable strategies for growing, serving, and maintaining a workforce prepared to address substance abuse prevention across an integrated continuum of care, and across the lifespan. In order to inform this process, ADAP conducted assessments of substance abuse workforce development resources and needs. Two surveys were developed and administered by the Center for Health and Learning with input and advisement from the ADAP staff. These recommendations reflect the data from these surveys.

The first survey, a Workforce Development Resource Assessment, was conducted In February 2015, and completed by a leadership representative of 10 ADAP partner organizations. The second survey, a Workforce Development Provider Assessment, was conducted in April-May 2015, and completed by 91 substance abuse professionals representing three primary work areas: Prevention (31%), Treatment (50%) and Recovery/Transitional Housing (19%). A limitation of the two surveys is that the Respondents were people in leadership positions and were generally experienced professionals, as indicated by more than 70% having seven or more years' of experience on the Provider Survey. There were few entry level or early career professionals surveyed, therefore, those needs are not well represented in the results.

Questions for the Provider Assessment were based on the IC&RC domains and approved by ADAP. IC&RC is the world's largest credentialing organization for substance abuse professionals across Prevention, Substance Use Treatment and Recovery.

## Recommendation #1

**Identify the Population Health Outcomes to which Professional Practice Improvement is linked, and the Measures that will be used to monitor the efforts.**

- Use data, assessment and evaluation to inform workforce development activities.

## Recommendation #2

**Design the Framework for the Workforce Development System.**

- Identify the Guiding Principles of a Workforce Development System to promote integration across a continuum of care.
- Identify a common core of professional practice topics for *across the continuum of care*.
- Establish the pathway to obtain the professional knowledge and skills required for each primary area of work. This includes determining the role of Certification for each primary area, or the framework/s that the system will use to create opportunities for Workforce Development.
- Establish the core content, concepts and skills for each primary work area: Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery. (This may require action on Recommendation #3 first, and further inventory of current offerings and providers to identify overlap, gaps and opportunities).
- Identify beginner, advanced and refresher levels of offerings, and professional practice supports for Early/Beginner, Mid-level and Advanced stages of career.
- Provide communications that cut across the continuum of care as well as within primary work areas around specific initiatives.

### Recommendation #3

#### Address issues related to Certification and/or Credentialing for each work area.

##### Prevention

- Determine how to approach credentialing or certification, or what “framework” will be used for the Prevention field. For example, VT may create a state supported model of professional development based on the IC&RC credentials **or** commit to supporting the credentialing of prevention professionals as an IC&RC Certified Prevention Specialist.
- Identify ways to strategically support the linking of mutually supporting Prevention and Recovery efforts at the state and community level.

##### Treatment

- Clarify the role/position and status of LADC certification /requirement in Vermont as a qualifier for Medicaid reimbursement.
- Further identify barriers to licensure at all levels, e.g., LADC, Masters Level and Dual certification, and identify strategies to address the barriers.
- Address process issues related to obtaining education for the certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor, in order to increase access.

##### Recovery/Transitional Housing

- Consider the role of certification of Recovery Coaches If Recovery Peer Coaches are essential to a population-based model, establish in Vermont the basic training needed to become a Recovery Coach, with or without certification.

### Recommendation #4

#### Determine “how” the system will be delivered Across the Continuum and System-wide.

- Create a system that facilitates Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Recovery providers working together more seamlessly at the community level and to be more visible in how they work together.
- Create or expand an existing leadership group to coordinate so that priorities for different Departments and professionals are aligned, thereby leveraging resources.
- Create or expand an ad-hoc Advisory Group representing knowledge and skills across the continuum of care, and with Work Groups focused on Prevention, Treatment and Recovery/Transitional Housing, to provide input.
- Consider what resources from SAMHSA’s Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) national training and technical assistance system, and the federal Addiction Transfer Technology Centers (ATTC) could offer to support a system of delivery.
- Assess opportunities for sharing of resources and collaboration among regional partners, e.g., Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, etc.
- Identify appropriate formats and strategies for supporting professional knowledge and practices.

### Recommendation #5

#### Define strategies for Recruitment and Retention.

- Explore ways to offer incentives to enter the field, including financial and logistical support.
- Commit to a professional development plan that insures sustainability of knowledge and skills in each area of workforce across all levels of experience and IC&RC domains, while at the same time ensuring offerings and support for appropriate entry level professionals.