



**For Immediate Release**

**Contacts:**

Cathy Aikman, [CAikman@covidsupportvt.org](mailto:CAikman@covidsupportvt.org)

Iza Socha, [iza@junapr.com](mailto:iza@junapr.com)

**COVID Support VT Will Assist Vermonters Through The Pandemic**

Offering self-help tips, resources, and a way to connect to existing mental health and community services.

**Montpelier, VT (July 28, 2020)**— Many, if not most, Americans are feeling deepened anxiety, loneliness, and uncertainty about the future, all of which takes a heavy toll on daily life. Vermonters are no exception. To help alleviate the extraordinary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in our state, COVID Support VT offers self-help tips, resources, and a way to connect to existing mental health and community services, all of which promote resilience, empowerment and recovery.

“The people of Vermont have done an incredible job keeping our state as safe as possible with the lowest COVID-19 infection rates in the country,” said Sarah Squirrell, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health. “The low rates have required a lot of sacrifice, though, which has been difficult. COVID Support VT is here to help us through the tough times,” she said. COVID Support VT can be found on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

“In addition to the physical toll of COVID-19, we know the pandemic is greatly impacting the mental wellbeing of our families, friends and neighbors,” Squirrell said. “We are launching COVID Support VT to ensure that every person in the state has the resources they need to cope with the stressors that are present in our lives today.”

COVID Support VT is for anyone needing emotional support to deal with stressful circumstances due to the pandemic. The program will work to reach higher-risk populations such as essential workers, elders, homeless, children, new Americans and refugees, people in recovery from mental health conditions or substance use disorders, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and more. In addition to being at high risk of severe illness, people in these groups may also be experiencing social isolation and loneliness, which can lead to both poor mental and physical health.

“No one is immune to loneliness, stress, or anxiety and that is especially true as we navigate COVID-19. For many, the isolation, financial impact, and familial stressors are simply overwhelming.” says Simone Rueschemeyer, Executive Director, Vermont Care Network/Vermont Care Partners. “COVID Support VT will help thousands of Vermonters, by connecting them to the community-based system of mental health services throughout the state”, she said. “And because the mental health services providers work closely with other community organizations, they can help Vermonters find the services that they need.”

“We are in this together to help all of us see a brighter future ahead,” she said.

The services available through COVID Support VT are designed to help those suffering from the pandemic by connecting them to

- resources for mental and emotional well-being,
- local and national helplines, most of which are available 24/7;
- accessible and easy-to-access education and helpful tips on coping with the effects of the pandemic, and
- connections to community organizations that provide crucial services.

Future services may include

- crisis counselors to provide individual brief support counseling and connections to community resources, through a single call center;
- virtual group counseling, and
- ongoing education and outreach tailored to support the emotional well-being of Vermonters.

COVID Support VT complements the mental health and community services that already exist throughout Vermont. This program is another resource to help ensure Vermonters are supported and can thrive during such unusual and trying times. Funding is provided through a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). [Vermont Care Partners \(VCP\)](#) is administering the crisis counseling grant under contract with the Vermont Department of Mental Health.

For more information and resources, visit [covidsupportvt.org](https://covidsupportvt.org), call 802.828.7368 or email [info@covidsupportvt.org](mailto:info@covidsupportvt.org).

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### **About COVID Support VT**

COVID Support VT offers self-help tips, resources, and a way to connect to existing mental health and community services that promote resilience, empowerment, and recovery. The program is administered by the Vermont Department of Mental Health, Vermont Care Partners, and in conjunction with other community services in our State. Grant funded by FEMA.

Learn more at <https://covidsupportvt.org/> or look for COVID Support VT on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

### **About Vermont Care Partners (VCP)**

VCP is a statewide network of community-based agencies providing mental health, substance use, and intellectual and developmental disability services and supports. VCP agencies support Vermonters to lead healthy, safe, and satisfying lives community by community. Learn more at <https://vermontcarepartners.org/>.

### **About Vermont Department of Mental Health (DMH)**

DMH works to improve the conditions and well-being of Vermonters and protect those who cannot protect themselves. The Individuals and families that DMH supports in Vermont's communities want the same things we all want; safe homes, close friends, loving relationships, good health and something meaningful to do each day. Our job is to help them succeed. Learn more at <https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov>.