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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 9, 2021

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Governor Phil Scott Appoints Emily J. Hawes as Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Alison Krompf as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health (DMH)

Mike Smith, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Human Services, announced today that Emily J. Hawes has been appointed by Governor Phil Scott to be Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health beginning July 4th. Ms. Hawes will assume the responsibility for day-to-day operations and management of DMH in place of Commissioner Sarah Squirrelle who is moving out of state with her family. Ms. Hawes has worked for DMH in several capacities over the past 7 years, beginning as a Care Manager (liaison to the Department of Corrections and The Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program), progressing to Care Management Director with statewide oversight for acute care beds for those under the care and custody of the Commissioner, moving up to become the Director of Operations, Planning and Development in 2017, with oversight for all grants and contracts and the DMH Continuing Operations Plan; and has served for the past four years as the CEO of the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH), a 25-bed acute care psychiatric hospital for the state.

Emily earned her BS in Rehabilitation Services and MS in Rehabilitation Counseling, both from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas. She is also a licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor in the State of Vermont.

Additionally, Governor Scott has appointed Alison Krompf to be Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health beginning July 4th. Ms. Krompf will replace departing Deputy Commissioner Mourning Fox who is leaving state government to pursue a new opportunity.

Alison has spent the past two years in her role as Director of Quality and Accountability, providing executive direction, oversight and coordination of quality, performance improvement, accountability, and reporting activities for DMH. Previously, she served as Senior Policy Advisor to DMH, acting as legislative liaison for the department, writing bill reviews and reports, co-chairing the AHS Suicide Prevention Committee and the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths state implementation team.

Alison earned a BA in Psychology from Colgate University; MA in Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine University; and is working on her PhD in Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Vermont.

“As we recover from the pandemic and all its impacts, the work of the Department of Mental Health is as important as ever,” said Governor Scott. “Emily and Alison are both talented and experienced leaders who will excel in these new roles. I also want to thank Commissioner Squirrell and Deputy Commissioner Fox for their incredible work and wish them both the best in their next chapters.”

Secretary Smith expressed his gratitude to both Commissioner Squirrell and Deputy Commissioner Fox for their leadership of the department. “They both have been great leaders and have earned the respect of everyone they encountered. They will be missed.”

“However,” Smith added, “we are so fortunate to have employees in the department that are well qualified to step into leadership positions. The department will be in good hands with Emily and Alison in charge.”

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