



Dear Vermont Opiate Settlement Committee:

Please consider this letter a formal acknowledgement that Pathways Vermont unequivocally supports Overdose Prevention Centers across Vermont. At Pathways Vermont, we support many community members who use drugs. Some of our staff have their own experiences with drug use. Because of this, we are deeply committed to our values of individual choice, self-determination, and harm reduction. We understand that a true harm reduction approach:

- (1) accepts wholeheartedly that people use drugs;
- (2) regards each person as the expert of their own experience;
- (3) centers the rights, choice, and voice of people who use drugs;
- (4) embodies a “nothing about us without us” philosophy;
- (5) does not moralize drug use;
- (6) seeks to decrease shame and stigma;
- (7) is non-judgmental, non-coercive, and community-based;
- (8) and reduces spread of disease and reduces overdose deaths.

For these reasons, Overdose Prevention Centers are vital resources that need to be integrated into our communities and systems of care.

When you meet on December 22nd, please recommend full funding for the establishment of two overdose prevention centers in Vermont.

If you have any questions about our formal acknowledgement - please reach out to Katie Bourque at katie@pathwaysvermont.org

Sincerely,
[Pathways Vermont](#)