NKHS
Northeast Kingdom Human Services

We're All About **Being Human!**

Northeast Kingdom Human Services Consumer Guide

YOUR GUIDE TO SERVICES AT NKHS

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Agency Overview

This Consumer Guide was created to help you become familiar with the programs, practices, and services of Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS). More detailed information regarding specific agency policies is available upon your request. You will learn more about our procedures and practices as you meet with our staff, and your provider may also give you additional information.

Our Mission:

To empower individuals, families, and communities by promoting hope, healing, and support.

Our Vision:

To be leaders in rural health and human services by offering programs that are innovative, flexible, and comprehensive.

Our Values:

- *Person-Centered - We engage with the whole person, meeting everyone where they are on their journey. We recognize strengths and embrace diverse identities.*
- *Courage - We recognize the bravery it takes to seek help. With compassion and strength, we walk alongside others, celebrating resilience and illuminating the path towards healing and growth.*
- *Dignity - We advocate for change that destigmatizes mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities, ensuring equal rights, support, and respect. Every person has inherent value and the right to belong, regardless of their condition, status, or identity.*
- *Discovery - We prioritize curiosity and understanding over making assumptions. By valuing diverse insights, we make thoughtful decisions and foster growth for ourselves and those we serve.*
- *Community - Strong partnerships, connections, and relationships are the foundation of our mission. We advocate for inclusive spaces that honor diversity, knowing that varied lived experiences strengthen our work.*

St. Johnsbury Office: 2225 Portland Road St. Johnsbury, VT

PO Box 368 St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

(802) 748-3181 toll free - 800-649-0118

Derby/Newport Office: 181 Crawford Road Derby, VT

PO Box 724 Newport, Vermont, 05855

(802) 334-6744 toll free – 800-696-4979

General Information (802) 334-6744

Who We Serve

Over 500 employees provide case management, community and home supports, residential care, psychiatry, medication management, individual therapy, group therapy, vocational supports, school based counseling, emergency care, and respite services for 3400+ clients annually who may be challenged by conditions affecting mind, body, and spirit. We offer outreach and consultation services to communities, schools, and businesses in our service area. Crisis intervention services are available twenty-four hours a day every day of the year by contacting either the Derby or St. Johnsbury office. Services are provided regardless of an individual's ability to pay.

As a designated agency, NKHS provides services to individuals regardless of their housing status. Care coordinators and case managers are available to assist individuals requesting behavioral health services who are homeless and to link them with area resources and community partners.

We are committed to providing compassionate, person-centered mental health care to all individuals, regardless of their geographic location or catchment area. Every client is treated with dignity, respect, and equity, and we strive to ensure that access to support is guided by need, not geographic boundaries. Our goal is to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels seen, heard, and supported.

NKHS has contracts with nineteen area schools to provide on-site behavioral health services. Each school system follows the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act enacted by the federal government to address educational barriers and challenges created by homelessness by guaranteeing students experiencing homelessness the right to enroll and attend school and providing support needed for school support, including behavioral health services.

Client Access

Our Client Access Teams are the trained receptionists willing and ready to help you or your loved ones when they walk in the door. They understand that the first visit may be overwhelming and intimidating. They are there to help make the process feel safe and welcoming. It is not easy to ask for help. At NKHS we understand, and we are here to support and assist and to make it easy.

At Northeast Kingdom Human Services, our Client Access Teams are the first faces you see when entering our buildings, and the first voices you hear when calling our offices. Nothing is more important than feeling welcomed upon a first visit, or a 100th visit – whether coming in the front door, or calling to speak with one of our receptionists. We pride ourselves on our Access Teams' professional, supportive,

friendly, empathetic, and resourceful ways. We strive to make a difference in whether or not a first visit or phone call will lead to a second. The Team is passionate about our mission. The simple kindness and a helping hand on the front end can make such a difference in someone's life. Knowing that this team could very well mean the difference between someone pursuing services at NKHS or opting out is, in itself, an incentive to provide a customer service model that is second to none! Whether coming in to do registration paperwork, scheduling an appointment with one of our clinicians, looking to speak with a case manager, or coming into the office for an interview in pursuit of employment with NKHS…the Client Access Team is here and ready to welcome you!

When individuals' complete registration paperwork which involve signing sign consent forms, we offer Language Line support for those who do not speak English and for older adults who may need assistance. Our consumer handbook is also available by QR code so individuals can use a reading app on their electronic device. If someone would like the handbook to read aloud because of language or accessibility needs, our team is happy to assist.

Our Commitment to Using Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

At NKHS, we provide high-quality, effective care that supports each person's mental health and recovery journey. One important way we do this is by using **Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)** treatments and therapies that have been proven through research to help people improve their mental health and well-being.

EBPs are carefully designed approaches that have shown positive results for many people across different settings. They are based on clinical evidence, are guided by professional expertise, and consider the unique needs, culture, and preferences of the person receiving care. By using EBPs, we ensure that our clients receive care that is both compassionate and effective.

At NKHS, EBPs are chosen based on your individual needs, diagnosis, age, and treatment goals. Your provider will work closely with you to understand your personal experience and what matters most to you. Together, you will create a treatment plan that may include one or more EBPs suited to support your progress and recovery.

Some examples of EBPs used at NKHS include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC), Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), Motivational Interviewing, Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), and others as needed to best meet clinical needs.

If you would like to know more about the EBP you are receiving your provider will explain how it works, what to expect during sessions, and how progress will be tracked. We welcome your questions

and encourage ongoing feedback to ensure that the care you receive feels right for you and meets your needs.

At NKHS, we believe that healing happens best when care is informed by evidence and delivered with compassion, We use evidence-based practices to help you feel better, reach your goals, and live the kind of life that's meaningful to you.

Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services (IDDS)

The mission of Developmental Services is to help individuals with disabilities lead normal and complete lives and to be accepted, valued, and contributing members of their families and communities. Helping all individuals live, work, and play as respected members of society allows for a higher quality of living overall.

The Derby and St. Johnsbury offices provide comprehensive services to individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities, Autism, and other pervasive developmental disorders. Our community-based services are individualized, flexible, and designed to assist people with disabilities to live in their own homes and to be productive members of society.

Intake and Eligibility for Services

There are three eligibility criteria that an individual must meet to receive any Developmental Disabilities Services in the State of VT. ***Effective 08/11/25-*Please contact PCG Intake and Eligibility team at (833) 426-5668 or at VTDDSDIntake@pcgus.com .**

1) ***Residency:*** Be a resident of Vermont. This means being physically present in Vermont with the intention to remain in Vermont and to make one's home in Vermont (in the case of a child, at least one custodial parent shall be a resident of Vermont.)
2) ***Financial:*** A current Medicaid recipient. If not a current Medicaid recipient, please contact an Assister through the VT Department of VT Health Access for assistance.
3) ***Clinical:*** Be found clinically eligible based on the Regulations Implementing the Developmental Disabilities Act (HCAR 7.100), including having an intellectual and/or developmental disability (I/DD). In addition, each program area may have individual eligibility requirements.

Personal direct care services assist individuals with personal care and safety, skill development, vocational support, personal choice, and self-determination. The State of Vermont and the Public Consulting Group provides eligibility determination, individualized life planning, information and referrals, family support, and resource allocation. Direct Service Organization (Designated

Agency-NKHS) focus on building natural support for individuals with disabilities in collaboration with Case Management Organizations-who provide conflict free case management services (effective 10/01/2025). Source: https://ddsd.vermont.gov/apply-dd-services

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

The primary funding source for individuals with developmental disabilities is Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) funded under the Global Commitment to Health Medicaid Waiver. HCBS services are tailored to the individual's specific needs and based on an individualized budget and person-centered plan.

Services listed below may include the following based on the individual's SIS-A Assessment (Needs Assessment):

Clinical Services

Clinical Services include assessment, therapeutic, medication or medical services provided by clinical or medical staff. These services are medically necessary and accessed on a fee for service basis through Medicaid.

Service Coordination

Provided in collaboration with Case Management Organizations to support individuals in planning, developing, choosing, gaining access to, coordinating, and monitoring the provision of services needed and supports for a specific individual. Representative Payee services are also available on a case-by-case basis.

Community Supports

Community Supports assist individuals to develop skills and social connections and may include teaching and/or assistance in daily living, support to participate in community activities, and building and sustaining healthy personal, family, and community relationships.

Employment Supports

Employment support provides a full range of services which include support with discovery interests, company tours, job development, employer meet and greets, on the job training, and a variety of person-centered support options which enable transition age youth and adults with disabilities to access and succeed in competitive employment of their choosing. Supported employment services help individuals maintain meaningful employment within their communities.

Crisis Services

Crisis Services are time-limited, intensive, support provided for individuals who are currently experiencing, or may be expected to experience, a psychological, behavioral, or emotional crisis.

In Home Supports

Home Supports provide services and support for individuals in their homes. Services include assistance and resources to improve and maintain opportunities and experiences for individuals to be as independent as possible in their home and community. Supports fostering independent living skills.

Shared Living Supports

Home Supports provide services, support, and supervision for individuals in and around their residences up to twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week (24/7). Services include assistance and resources to improve and maintain opportunities and experiences for individuals to be as independent as possible in their home and community. Home support settings may be in the home of a shared living provider or a home that is staffed by a service provider (see below) on a full-time basis. Support may also be provided in the person's own home to maintain and foster continued independence.

Staffed Living Homes

Staffed Living Homes are specialized residences for one or two individuals who require significant support to help manage their emotional, behavioral, and/or medical needs. Staffed homes provide individualized support, by trained agency staff, twenty-four hours per day.

Group Homes

Group Homes are Residential Care Homes/Therapeutic Community Residences that are state licensed group living arrangements designed to meet the needs of people who cannot live independently and, often, require a greater level of care and support than can typically be provided through other home support options. Despite the group setting, services are provided to meet each individual's specific needs and may include help managing medical issues, emotional and behavioral support, and/or assistance with daily activities such as eating, walking, toileting, bathing, and dressing. Residential Care Homes and Therapeutic Community Residences provide nursing oversight and, under certain conditions, may be able to provide a nursing home level of care.

Respite Support

Respite Support assists family members and shared living providers to help support individuals with disabilities who live with them. This support is provided on a short-term basis for necessary breaks.

Flexible Family Funding

Flexible Family Funding for eligible families of adults and children with developmental disabilities helps pay for any legal good or activity that the family chooses, such as respite, assistive technology, home modification, individual and household needs, or recreational activities. These income-based funds, determined by a sliding scale, are used at the discretion of the family. *Individuals receiving HCBS are not eligible for this service.

The Bridge Program

The Bridge Program supports families of children and young adults under age 22, who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, to access and coordinate needed medical, educational, social, or other services. *Individuals receiving HCBS are not eligible for this service.

Adult Family Care

The Adult Family Care (AFC) program is a 24-hour Home and Community Based Service for Vermont's who have Long-Term Care Medicaid and are eligible for Choices for Care funding. This program affords supports for individuals to reside in a home environment rather than living in a skilled nursing facility. This service provides a safe, family-oriented home that is designed to support autonomy while maximizing on independence and dignity.

Behavioral Health Services

Adult Outpatient Program

NKHS Adult Outpatient Services provide comprehensive, person-centered behavioral health care for adults experiencing mental health conditions, substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, and challenges related to daily living, emotional distress, or serious and persistent mental illness. Services begin with a comprehensive assessment that includes screening and evaluation of behavioral health, substance use, physical health, social determinants of health, strengths, needs, risks, and treatment preferences. Standardized, evidence-based screening and assessment tools are utilized to support measurement-based care and collaborative treatment planning.

Services are trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, culturally responsive, strengths-based, and driven by the goals and preferences of each individual served. Consumers actively participate in developing individualized treatment plans that promote wellness, resilience, recovery, and community integration.

NKHS provides a continuum of outpatient behavioral health services, including individual, family, and group therapy; psychiatric evaluation and medication management; substance use disorder treatment; crisis response and stabilization; care coordination; and support for co- occurring mental health and substance use disorders. Services are coordinated across providers and systems to ensure integrated, seamless care.

Our multidisciplinary team includes psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, social workers, licensed counselors, case managers, and clinicians trained in treating co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. NKHS is committed to improving quality of life through evidence-based practices, integrated treatment, and individualized recovery supports that help adults achieve their personal goals and thrive within their communities.

Integrated Mental Health and Substance Use Services

NKHS integrated its adult mental health and substance use disorder programs to ensure timely, coordinated, and equitable access to comprehensive behavioral health services. This integrated approach supports best practices in screening, assessment, treatment, recovery planning, and ongoing care for individuals with co-occurring disorders. Services are delivered by a unified clinical team that works collaboratively across programs to provide coordinated and whole-person care.

Agency and Community-Based Services and Screenings

NKHS provides behavioral health services and screenings in agency, community, and partner settings, including:

- Eldercare services delivered in community and office-based settings
- Correctional services, including offender re-entry support
- Impaired Driver Rehabilitation Program (IDRP)
- Public Inebriate Program assessment and diversion bed services
- Reach Up case management, counseling, and supportive services
- Screening, referral, consultation, and care coordination services in collaboration with community partners and healthcare providers

TPL63 Supports

The TPL63 program is designed to serve consumers who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness. The role of TPL63 staff is to assist consumers with day-to-day functions to facilitate community reintegration and increase independence. It is our mission to fully support consumers in the community, while serving as ambassadors for addressing and breaking down stigma of mental illness. Staff are often crucial liaisons between the consumer and a variety of community partners such as primary care doctors, family members, landlords, etc. This effort helps the consumer to achieve a higher level of holistic health and functioning. The program works to create bridges between the consumer and the community as a whole to improve quality of life and increase independence for each consumer served.

For more details on eligibility and qualifications, please contact

NKHS at (802) 748-3181 or (802) 334-6744

The TPL63 program provides comprehensive community-based support services and assists adults that have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness. Symptoms may be substantially disabling, and long-term or short-term. The program helps individuals and their families to develop skills and supports important to living the life they want for themselves.

The team applies supports the PACT Model (Program of Assertive Community Treatment) as well as DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) informed case management, and the Supported Employment model.

The following services are offered:

- Case Management
- Community Support and Integration (individual and groups)
- Representative Payee
- Housing Support and Coordination
- Psychiatric assessment and medication management
- Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) services and additional peer supports
- Crisis Supports

- Family-based Intervention/Supports
- Physical Health Coordination
- Wellness Activities
- Individual and Group Psychotherapy
- Employment Coordination and Support

Eldercare

NKHS Eldercare program serves homebound people over 65 or younger, if disabled, and homebound. We offer an in person or virtual assessment and follow up visits to address mental health and/or substance use issues and case management needs.

Referrals to the Eldercare program come from the Council on Aging, the VNA, hospitals, primary care physicians, and directly from clients and families. Our staff help address issues of self-neglecting behaviors, hoarding, isolating behaviors, depression, anxiety or stress, and other mental health related symptoms.

Reach Up

The Reach Up Service Coordinator works with the State of Vermont Reach Up Program as well as other outside agencies such as NECKA, Umbrella, and other community partners depending on the individual's needs. Service Coordination is based on individual goals and can be flexible to assist the person in reaching their goal of independence.

Referrals for Reach Up are received from Economic Services. Reach Up assistance can also provide minimal financial assistance to families who meet identified income levels. Reach Up case managers help participants set goals that will one day enable them to no longer need the Reach Up assistance, being able to provide for their families on their own.

Impaired Driver Rehabilitation Program (IDRP)

If you are convicted of driving under the influence in the state of Vermont you must complete the Impaired Driver Rehabilitation Program (IDRP) to reinstate your privilege to drive. The State of Vermont utilizes Prime for Life as its educational program.

To register for IDRP or for more information

You may sign up for Weekend IDRP by:

- Calling (802)-748-3181
- Visit our website nkhs.org

If it is determined that treatment is required, you will complete a treatment program with a licensed counselor. The IDRP program evaluator will provide additional information about the process and requirements at your intake evaluation.

Other requirements or suspensions may need to be satisfied before your privilege to drive can be reinstated. In these instances, contact the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) at 802-828-2050.

If you received your DUI in another state, you must check with them to see if they will accept Vermont's program.

CARE Bed

The CARE Bed is a two-bed crisis unit with 24-hour staffing, seven days a week, now in its 15th year of operation. There is one staff person to two clients but can accommodate a one-to-one capacity, if needed. The CARE Bed provides an alternative to hospitalization or a step-down option, if appropriate, for clients in mental health crisis, and its overall mission is to serve and retain clients within their own community.

Emergency Services at NKHS

At Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS), Emergency Services are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Our Emergency Services system is designed to meet people where they are—physically, emotionally, and situationally—during times of crisis, while prioritizing safety, dignity, and the least restrictive level of care possible.

Emergency Services is no longer centered on a single location. Instead, it is a community-based crisis response system that integrates mobile crisis care, crisis hotline services, law-enforcement partnerships, urgent care, and short-term crisis stabilization. In hospitals or emergency departments medical clearance or higher levels of care are needed.

Mobile Crisis Services

When someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, our Mobile Crisis Team responds directly to the person, rather than requiring the individual to come to an office or emergency department whenever possible. Mobile Crisis responses are provided by a team of licensed mobile crisis clinicians and trained peer support specialists, working together to offer both clinical support and lived-experience perspective.

Mobile Crisis clinicians and peer support specialists can meet individuals:

- In their home

- In the community
- At schools, workplaces, or other safe locations

During a mobile crisis response, the team:

- Completes a comprehensive crisis screening and risk assessment
- Focuses on safety, stabilization, and calming the immediate situation
- Incorporates the individual's natural supports (family, friends, caregivers) whenever appropriate
- Develops or updates a personalized safety plan
- Works to reduce distress and avoid unnecessary hospitalization while keeping the individual and community safe

If a higher level of care is needed, Emergency Services staff help coordinate next steps, including hospital care or short-term crisis stabilization services.

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988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

(Phone, Text, and Chat)

NKHS is part of the national 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, providing 24/7 confidential crisis support. People can access help through:

- Phone
- Text
- Online chat

Individuals who contact 988 are connected with trained crisis counselors who:

- Provide emotional support during moments of distress
- Assist with de-escalation and safety planning
- Coordinate with local NKHS Mobile Crisis teams when an in-person response is helpful or requested

The original Lifeline number 1-800-273-8255 remains active and will continue to function.

Embedded Mental Health Specialists with Vermont State Police

NKHS provides Embedded Mental Health Specialists who work directly alongside the Vermont State Police.
These clinicians:

- Respond with troopers to behavioral health-related calls
- Provide on-scene mental health expertise
- Help de-escalate high-stress situations
- Connect individuals to community-based services instead of relying solely on law- enforcement or hospital responses

This partnership improves safety, enhances collaboration, and helps ensure behavioral health crises receive a clinical response whenever possible.

Mental Health Urgent Care & Crisis Stabilization

The Front Porch is NKHS's community-based alternative to the emergency department, offering timely, supportive care for individuals experiencing mental health distress. Services at The Front Porch are delivered by multidisciplinary teams that include clinicians and peer support specialists, ensuring both clinical expertise and lived-experience support are available.

Front Porch Mental Health Urgent Care

Mental Health Urgent Care provides same-day, walk-in or referral-based mental health evaluations for individuals experiencing escalating distress that does not require emergency hospitalization.
Urgent Care services include:

- Crisis assessments
- Brief clinical interventions
- Safety planning
- Care coordination and follow-up planning
- Peer support, offering connection, understanding, and practical support from individuals with lived experience

Urgent Care helps people get timely support, reduce distress, and connect to ongoing services before a crisis becomes unmanageable.

Crisis Stabilization Program (2–10 Day Stay)

For individuals who need short-term, intensive support, NKHS offers a 2–10 day Crisis Stabilization Program at The Front Porch.
This program:

- Provides a safe, supportive, and recovery-oriented environment
- Includes ongoing clinical care and peer support services throughout the stay
- Focuses on stabilization, recovery, and individualized planning
- Serves as an alternative to hospitalization or a step-down option following a hospital stay
- Helps individuals return to the community with stronger supports, coping strategies, and follow-up care in place

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Peer Support & Recovery-Oriented Care

Peer Support is a core part of Emergency Services at NKHS. Individuals with lived experience partner with people in crisis to provide connection, hope, and support grounded in real-world experience.
Recovery-oriented care focuses on:

- Strengths-based support
- Collaborative decision-making
- Respect for personal goals and preferences
- Building skills and supports that promote long-term wellness

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Child, Youth, and Family Services (CYFS)

Child, Youth, and Family Services provides comprehensive services based on assessment of the individualized and unique needs of children and families.

We strive to provide services that are strengths-based, family-driven, and trauma-informed.

These services include light to intensive case management, individual and family counseling, psychiatry, crisis intervention, respite, community skills, transitional services, consultation, education, and training.

Child, Youth, and Family Support and Stabilization

The Child, Youth, and Family Support and Stabilization Department consists of the following programs to meet the specialized needs of individuals and families. These programs are comprised

of targeted services that support children and their families, to achieve positive outcomes, and promote healing - Early Childhood Program (CIS), Home and Community Support and Stabilization Program, and Outpatient Program. All consents will be signed by the appropriate guardian(s) for youth in all NKHS programs. In many cases, youth who are 12 years of age or older may be able to consent to substance use screening, assessment, treatment, and recovery support services without permission from a parent or guardian, as allowed by state law.

Information shared during substance use treatment is protected by federal and state confidentiality laws. This means that details about your treatment generally cannot be shared with parents, guardians, schools, employers, or others without your written permission, except in specific situations required or permitted by law, such as concerns about safety, abuse, neglect, or certain court orders.

Early Childhood Program

Early Childhood Program includes our involvement, as a community partner, in the State of Vermont's approach to support services - Children's Integrated Services (CIS). CIS encompasses four components including Maternal Health Nursing and Family Support, Early Child Family Mental Health, Early Intervention, and Specialized Child Care Services.

Home and Community Support and Stabilization Program

Home and Community Support and Stabilization Program works with ages six through 21 and provides trauma-informed, strengths based, and consumer-driven care to youth and their families. Services are provided in the home, in the community, and in office settings, and include individualized and comprehensive assessment and evaluation, intensive case management, community skills, respite, crisis intervention, education and training, and consultation and referral.

NKHS works with other partners – including pediatrician offices and the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

School Based Services Program

The School Based Services Department is comprised of a number of clinicians and case managers that work collaboratively with our schools to provide services to youth in a school setting. This program provides trauma-informed case management and counseling services in a variety of school settings. Services address the social and emotional needs of youth, and work toward building resiliency, strengthening efficacy, and building skills for addressing any identified mental health needs.

Behavior Intervention (BI) Program

This program offers services to school-aged youth with emotional/behavioral disorders, developmental trauma, Autism Spectrum disorders, other mental health needs, and/or developmental or learning disabilities with significant social and behavioral needs. The program works collaboratively with schools, families, and communities to provide the best therapeutic support each child needs to be successful. BI staff provide children with strength-based and positive behavioral programming that creates the opportunity for skill building needed to be self-sufficient and contributing members of their school and general communities.

Information Disclosure

Consent and Agreement to the Use and Disclosure of Health Information

For Treatment, Payment or Healthcare Operations

I understand that as part of my care, the Agency originates and maintains records describing my health history, symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and any plans for future care or treatment. I understand that this information serves as:

- A basis for planning my care and treatment,
- A means of communication among the professionals who contribute to my care,
- A source of information for applying my diagnosis and information to my bill,
- A means by which a third-party can verify that services billed were actually provided,
- And a tool for routine healthcare operations such as assessing quality, reviewing the competence of health care professionals and the services that are offered and for performing specially approved research studies.

I have been provided with a *Notice of Privacy Practices* that provides a more complete description of information uses and disclosures (release of, or access to, your information). I understand that I have the right to review the notice prior to signing this consent. I understand that the Agency reserves the right to change its notice and practices. However, prior to a material change taking effect, the Agency will publish an announcement of the change at every Agency facility and on its website.

I understand that the Agency is a provider organization that contracts with the Vermont Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL), and/or Department of Health (VDH) and that they may access my health information as necessary to fulfill their legal responsibilities under Vermont Law. I understand that even if I do not receive state-funded services from the Agency, the Agency may provide certain information to the Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) pursuant to an Agreement limiting its use to an extract of demographic, non-health related information.

I understand that my records are subject to confidentiality imposed by state and federal regulations including those implementing the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164. I also understand that substance use disorder patient records are protected by 42 CFR part 2, and that records may not be released or disclosed without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in the regulations.

I understand that the Agency may share my health information with my other treatment providers electronically, and that the Agency may also be making my information available through the Vermont Health Information Exchange (VHIE) to treating providers unless I have elected to not have my information accessible on the VHIE.

By signing the receipt of notices, I consent to the Agency's use and disclosure of protected health information about me (1) for treatment, payment and health care operations consistent with Agency's Notice of Privacy Practices, (2) for the purpose of fulfilling DMH's, DAIL's and/or VDH's responsibilities as authorized under Vermont and federal law and (3) to provide AHS pursuant to its Agreement with Agency, an extract of demographic, non-health related information. I understand that this consent will not expire while I am a client of Agency, but that I may revoke this consent in writing, except to the extent that the Agency has already taken action based upon my prior consent.

Notice of Privacy Practices

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

If you have any questions about this notice, please contact our Privacy Officer at (802) 748- 6350.

WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE

This notice describes our practices and that of:

- Any health care professional authorized to enter information into your health record.
- All divisions and programs of the Agency.
- Any volunteer we allow to help you while you are receiving services from the Agency.
- All employees, staff and other personnel.
- All Agency entities, sites and locations follow the terms of this notice. Staff members at these entities, sites and locations may share health information with each other for treatment, payment or operations purposes as described in this notice.

OUR PLEDGE REGARDING HEALTH INFORMATION

We understand that health information about you and your health is personal. We are committed to protecting your privacy and health information about you. We create a record of the care and services you receive at the Agency. We need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all of the records of your care generated by the Agency, whether made by Agency personnel or your personal doctor. Your personal doctor may have different policies or notices regarding the doctor's use and disclosure of your health information created in the doctor's office or clinic.

This notice will tell you about the ways in which we may use and disclose health information about you. We also describe your rights and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of health information.

We are required by law to:

- Make sure that health information that identifies you is kept private;
- Give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to health information about you;
- Follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect;

- Notify you following a breach of unsecured protected health information; and
- Comply with any state law that is more stringent or provides you greater rights than this Notice.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

You have the right to authorize our program to use and disclose your substance use disorder treatment records for purposes of your treatment, payment, and health care operations, consistent with HIPAA. Once you give this consent, these records can be shared with your treating providers, health plans, third-party payers, and those helping to operate this program, and may be disclosed further as permitted by HIPAA rules.

If you give us permission to share your substance use disorder treatment records for your care, payment, or health care operations, any provider or health plan who receives your records does not have to keep them separate from your other health information. They do not have to keep these records separate. Your substance use disorder information can be part of your regular medical record.

Your substance use disorder treatment records cannot be used or disclosed in legal proceedings against you without your written consent or a specific court order. You may revoke your consent at any time in writing, but this will not apply to disclosures already made in reliance on your consent.

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose health information. For each category of uses or disclosures we will explain what we mean and try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed.

For Treatment. We may use or disclose health information about you to provide you with treatment or services. This includes the potential sharing of information about you to doctors, nurses, clinicians, case managers, interns or other Agency personnel, or to providers outside of the Agency who are involved in your care such as your PCP, dentist, etc. For example, a clinician might be treating you for a mental health or substance use problem and need to talk with one of our psychiatrists, or another clinician, who has specialized training in a particular area of care. We may also disclose information about you to people outside the Agency who are involved in your health care.

Electronic Exchange of Your Health Information-In some instances, we may transfer health information about you electronically to other health care providers who are providing you treatment or to the insurance plan providing payment for your treatment. Your health information may also be made available through the Vermont Health Information Exchange ("VHIE"). The VHIE is a state-designated health information network operated by Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc. ("VITL"). Your treating health care providers may access your health information through the VHIE, unless you have chosen to opt out of the VHIE and you are not in need of emergency treatment. For information about the VHIE, see www.vitl.net.

For Payment. We may use and disclose health information about you so that the treatment and services you receive at the Agency may be approved by, billed to, and payment collected from a third party such as an insurance company. For example, we may need to give your health plan information about counseling you received at the Agency so your health plan will pay us or reimburse you for a counseling session. We may also tell your health plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the service / treatment. We will ask you to sign a consent form to allow us to bill your insurance company for substance use disorder treatment provided.

For Health Care Operations. We may use and disclose health information about you for Agency operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run the Agency and make sure that all individuals receiving services from us receive quality care. For example, we may use health information to review our treatment and services and to evaluate the performance of our staff in serving you. We may also combine health information about many clients to decide what additional services we should offer, what services are not needed, and whether certain new treatments are effective. We may also disclose information to doctors, nurses, clinicians, case managers, interns and other Northeast Kingdom Human Services personnel for review and learning purposes.

We may also combine the health information we have with health information from other designated mental health or special services agencies to compare how we are doing and see where we can make improvements in the services we offer. We will remove information that identifies you from this set of health information so others may use it to study health care and health care delivery without learning who the specific clients are. To facilitate this review, we provide information to a data repository operated under a Business Associate Agreement with Vermont Care Network to protect the confidentiality of the information.

Northeast Kingdom Human Services is a provider organization that contracts with the State of Vermont to be responsible to deliver services that may include community mental health services, developmental disability services, and some substance use disorder services and is obligated under our contracts with various departments within the Vermont Agency of Human Services ("AHS") to provide such services. As a result, these Departments may access health information related to these contracted services for the purpose of obtaining treatment for clients, making payment or for their health care operations. Additionally, we may provide health information to AHS for non-state funded clients pursuant to an Agreement limiting its use to an extract of demographic, non-health care information for AHS health care operations and health oversight purposes.

Use of Artificial Intelligence. Our program may use artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to help analyze and manage your health information to improve your care and program operations. When AI tools access your health information, we ensure they only access what is necessary for the task at hand, and that all privacy and security protections required by law are followed.

AI helps us detect patterns, improve clinical decision-making, and assist with administrative tasks. However, AI does not replace the judgment or decision-making of your healthcare provider. All

final decisions are made by your provider based on their professional expertise.

The use of AI is strictly controlled, and your information remains confidential in accordance with HIPAA and other applicable laws.

If you have questions about how AI is used in your care, or about how it impacts your privacy, please contact Compliance Officer at 802-748-6350.

Appointment Reminders. We may use and disclose information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment.

Alternative Treatment and Benefits and Services. We may use and disclose information about you to obtain and recommend to you other treatment options and available services as well as other health-related benefits or services.

Fundraising Activities. Should the need arise where information about you or where your participation is desired for the Agency's fundraising activities, the Agency would obtain your authorization. No information would be released for this purpose without your written authorization.

Research. Under extremely limited circumstances, we may use and disclose health information for research purposes. For example, a research project may involve comparing the health and recovery of all clients who received one medication to those who received another, for the same condition. All research projects are subject to a special approval process. This process evaluates a proposed research project and its use of health information, trying to balance the research needs with client's need for privacy of their health information. Before we use or disclose health information for research, the project will have been approved through this research approval process. We may, however, disclose health information about you to people preparing to conduct a research project; for example, to help them look for clients with specific health needs, so long as the health information they review does not leave the Agency. We will always ask for your specific permission if the researcher will have access to your name, address or other information that reveals who you are, or will be involved in your care at the Agency.

As Required by Law. We will disclose health information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law. In Vermont, this would include victims of child abuse; the abuse, neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults; or where a child under the age of sixteen is a victim of a crime; and firearm-related injuries. Under certain circumstances, the Departments within the Vermont Agency of Human Services who we contract with are mandated to access health information in order to carry out their responsibilities. We are required to disclose your health information to you and to anyone you request by written authorization to receive it.

To Avert a Serious and Imminent Threat to Health or Safety. We may use and disclose health information about you when necessary to prevent a serious and imminent threat to your health and safety or a serious risk of danger to an identifiable person or group of persons. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone reasonably believed to be able to help prevent the

threat.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Military and Veterans. If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release health information about you as required by military command authorities.

Workers' Compensation. We may release health information about you as authorized for workers' compensation or similar programs as authorized by Vermont law. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illnesses.

Public Health Risks. We may disclose health information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:

- To prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
- To report deaths;
- To report child abuse or neglect;
- To report abuse, neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults; any suspicion of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the elderly (age 60 or older), or a disabled adult with a diagnosed physical or mental impairment, must be reported;
- To report reactions to medications or problems with products;
- To notify individuals of recalls of products they may be using;
- To notify an individual who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a communicable disease or condition

Health Oversight Activities. We may disclose health information to a health oversight agency, such as the Vermont Agency of Human Services Departments of Mental Health, Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, and Health who we contract with, for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, but are not limited to, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws. We may disclose health information about you without your permission to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and/or Office of Civil Rights when they are conducting a compliance review, investigation or enforcement action or for a mandatory report of a health information breach.

Law Enforcement. We may disclose your health information to law enforcement officials as required by law or to comply with a court order or search warrant. We may also disclose limited information to law enforcement officials to report a crime committed on our premises or for identifying a missing person or a suspect to assist in a criminal investigation.

Legal Proceedings and Disputes. If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose health information about you in response to a court or administrative order. In certain legal proceedings, there are specific procedures that we are required to follow before substance use treatment records may be disclosed

Public Health Officials and Funeral Home Directors. We may release information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release health information to funeral directors thereby permitting them to carry out their duties.

Individuals in Custody. If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release health information about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official pertaining to care provided while you are in custody. This release would be necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

Reproductive and Gender-Affirming Health Care. Health records related to reproductive and gender-affirming health care are protected by state confidentiality and shield law provisions.

"Reproductive health care services" means all supplies, care, and services of a medical, behavioral health, mental health, surgical, psychiatric, therapeutic, diagnostic, preventative, rehabilitative, or supportive nature, including medication, relating to pregnancy, contraception, assisted reproduction, pregnancy loss management, or the termination of a pregnancy.

"Gender-affirming health care services" means all supplies, care, and services of a medical, behavioral health, mental health, surgical, psychiatric, therapeutic, diagnostic, preventative, rehabilitative, or supportive nature, including medication, relating to the treatment of gender dysphoria and gender incongruence.

We will not disclose such records for use in any civil, criminal, probate, administrative, or legislative proceeding, nor in response to requests from out-of-state entities—including subpoenas or court orders—unless the disclosure is (1) authorized by you; (2) required by Vermont or federal law; or (3) compelled by a Vermont court order that includes a finding of good cause. Before records may be disclosed under a court order, the court must expressly find on the evidentiary record that good cause exists and specify the records to be disclosed. The only other exceptions being disclosure to Vermont's Board of Medical Practice or Office of Professional Regulation in connection with bona fide investigations and disclosures to The Vermont Department of Health or the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living in connection with a bona fide investigation of a Vermont licensed health care facility.

Organized Health Care Arrangement.

Northeast Kingdom Human Services participates in an Organized Health Care Arrangement ("OHCA") under a Community Mobile Crisis Services Statewide System Agreement ("CMCS Program") among Counseling Service of Addison County, Inc.; Clara Martin Center, Inc.;

United Counseling Service of Bennington County, Inc.; Northwestern Counseling and Support Services, Inc.; Howard Center, Inc.; Lamoille County Mental Health Service, Inc.; Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc.; Rutland Mental Health Services, Inc.; Washington County Mental

Health Services, Inc., and Health Care & Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont, Inc. (together, the "Mobile Crisis OHCA Participants"). We work together through shared operations to provide mobile crisis services and ancillary functions including resource management, reporting, quality assurance, utilization management, information technology, and billing. to provide rapid community -based mobile crisis services.

As part of this Mobile Crisis OHCA, the Mobile Crisis OHCA Participant may exchange your PHI with each other as necessary to carry out the shared operations and activities of the CMCS Program.

Each Mobile Crisis OHCA Participant remains a separate legal entity and is individually responsible for meeting its own legal duties under HIPAA and other applicable privacy laws. This Notice describes how Northeast Kingdom Human Services and, when acting through the Mobile Crisis OHCA, may use and disclose your PHI and what rights you have regarding that information. When other laws, such as Vermont mental health confidentiality laws or 42 C.F.R. Part 2 governing certain substance use disorder records, provide more protection for your information, Northeast Kingdom Human Services and the Mobile Crisis OHCA Participants will follow those laws and will not use or disclose your information in ways those laws do not permit.

USES OF HEALTH INFORMATION REQUIRING WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION

Other uses and disclosures of health information not covered by this notice **or the laws that apply to us** will be made only with your written authorization. Examples of this may include substance use treatment information disclosures to lawyers (except this Agency's own lawyers), employers, the Vermont Office of Disability Determination Services or others who you know, but who are not involved in your care. Additionally, uses and disclosures of protected health information for our marketing purposes and disclosures that constitute a sale of protected health information require authorization. Also, Psychotherapy notes maintained by your treating provider can only be disclosed with your written authorization. If you provide us permission to use or disclose health information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing,at any time. If you revoke your permission, we will no longer use or disclose health information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and that we are required to retain our records of the services that we provided to you. You understand that protected health information that is disclosed may be redisclosed in a way that is no longer protected by HIPAA.

Community Health Teams ("CHT"). These teams were created under the Vermont Blueprint for Health and are designed to create alliances between healthcare providers, local and state agencies and community support organizations who are committed to improving quality of life through coordination of services. These services may be financial, physical, emotional or educational in nature. Your treating health care providers may only share your health information with a CHT if you have provided specific written consent for sharing.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

Any assistance (physical, communicative, etc.) you need to exercise your rights will be provided to you by the Agency.

You have the following rights regarding information we maintain about you:

Right to Review and Copy. You have the right to review and obtain a copy of health information that may be used to make decisions about your care. This may include both health and billing records. We are committed to responding to your requests for access to your health information as soon as possible and without unnecessary delay. Under HIPAA, we are required to provide access to your records within 30 days of your request. If your records are not readily available, we may extend this timeframe by up to 30 more days, but will notify you in writing of the reason for the delay. You may also request that we send your records to another person or entity of your choosing.

To review or obtain a copy of health information, you must submit your request in writing. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for copying, mailing, or supplies associated with your request. If you seek an electronic copy in a specific form or format of any portion of your health record, and we are unable to readily produce the copy in that form or format, we will work with you to provide an alternative form or format for the electronic copy.

There are limited instances when we may deny your request to inspect or obtain a copy of your health information.

Right to Amend. If you feel that health information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for the Agency.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to our Records Department. In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request.

We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support that request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- Was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
- Is not part of the designated record set kept by or for the Agency;
- Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or,
- Was determined accurate or complete by the Agency.

Right to an Accounting of Disclosures. You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures." This is a list of the disclosures we made of health information about you which were required by law and/or were not authorized by you. The list of disclosures will not include disclosures made for the purposes of treatment, payment for treatment services or health care

operations related to the treatment services.

To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to our Records Department. Your request must state a time period, which may not be longer than six years. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, on paper, electronically). The first list you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists, we may charge you for the costs of providing the list. We will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time before any costs are incurred.

Right to Request Restrictions. You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the health information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. We are not required to agree to your request unless your request is to limit disclosures to a health plan for the purpose of carrying out payment or health care operations that are not otherwise required by law and you or someone on your behalf other than your health plan has paid for those services in full at the time the health services are provided. However, if we do agree with a requested restriction or limitation, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment.

You also have the right to request a limit on the health information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member. For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a counseling session you received.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to our Records Department. In your request, you must tell us (1) what information you want to limit; (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both; and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply, for example, disclosures to your spouse.

Right to Request Confidential Communications. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about health matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to our Records Department. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice. You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of the current notice at any time. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, contact the Agency Privacy Officer at (802) 748-6350.

Security of Health Information.

We have in place appropriate safeguards to protect and secure the confidentiality of your health information. Due to the nature of community based human service practices, Agency representatives may possess your health information outside of the Agency. In these cases, Agency representatives will ensure the security and confidentiality of the information in a manner

that meets Agency policy, State and Federal Law.

Changes to This Notice.

We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for health information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. We will post a copy of the current notice in all Agency facilities. The notice will contain an effective date. Should we make a material change to this notice, we will, prior to the change taking effect, publish an announcement of the change at every Agency facility.

Complaints.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Agency or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with the Agency, call (802) 748-6350 and ask to speak with our Privacy Officer. All complaints must be submitted in writing. Complaint forms are available at each location including the reception area at the Agency's main office. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services can be contacted through their regional office at Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Government Center, J.F. Kennedy Federal Building – Room 1875, Boston, Massachusetts 02203, voice phone (800) 368 1019, fax (202) 619-3818, TDD (800) 537 7697, or email ocrmail@hhs.gov.

A Guide to Services at NKHS

The purpose of this notice is to tell you about Northeast Kingdom Human Services and to answer some of the questions you may have about our services.

Northeast Kingdom Human Services is a private, non-profit community mental health center that provides services in the areas of mental health, intellectual /developmental disabilities, and substance abuse/addictions. We serve individuals and families in need throughout Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans Counties.

Your Rights as a Client

We believe we can better assist you, if you are aware of your rights and responsibilities concerning decisions that affect your treatment.

Consumers shall have the following rights

1. The basic civil and legal rights accorded all citizens.
2. The right to treatment regardless of race, creed, gender, gender identity, age, national origin, political belief, disability, sexual orientation, or infectious disease.
3. The right to a humane mental health treatment environment and freedom from abuse and punishment.
4. The right to receive prompt and adequate treatment, rehabilitation and/or psycho educational services appropriate to condition and provided according to commonly accepted professional standards.
5. The right to understand service and treatment options.
6. The right to participate in the development of treatment plans and, if requested, to include family, friends and significant others from an identified natural support network in the treatment discussion.
7. The right to exercise control over treatment plans, actions, decisions, wishes and requests, as would any other person of comparable age. Consumers will not be exposed to rules or regulations that are excessive or inappropriate.
8. The right to the least restrictive conditions necessary to achieve treatment gains. The consumer has the right not to be subjected to adverse treatment procedures without his/her expressed and informed consent or that of a legal guardian (if relevant.)
9. The right to be informed of condition and progress.

10. The right to have the NKHS treatment record and all information gained during treatment (written or oral) kept confidential, except where state law or court order requires disclosure.
11. The right to be free of unnecessary or excessive medication and to be informed of the effects and side effect of any medication prescribed by the NKHS staff.
12. The right to refuse medication with the following exceptions:
    - After a court hearing and final commitment orders.
    - If the consumer's behavior is such that it is necessary to use medication to prevent physical or emotional harm to the consumer or other persons in an emergency situation.
13. The right not to be subjected to external research without express and informed consent of the individual and/or their guardian. Consent given may be withdrawn at any time by either consumer or guardian.
14. The right to petition the court for review of any civil commitment order in accordance with the provision of the law.
15. The right to due process with regard to grievances.
16. The right to be informed in a manner consistent with the person's level of understanding of the rights specified herein. The consumer or guardian will acknowledge, in writing, receipt of this rights' information.
17. You have the right to know your therapist's qualifications and experience. You also have the right to have a list, provided by the Office of Professional Regulation, of specific practices that constitute acts of unprofessional conduct.

We encourage clients to know their rights, to ask questions, and to make suggestions about their treatment. In the event that you are not satisfied with some aspect of our services, we encourage you or your advocate to discuss this with your assigned staff or contact the Division Chief of the program in which your services are being provided. If you are not satisfied that the issues have been resolved, or are uncomfortable with the results, there is a grievance and appeal process available. The appropriate forms are available from the receptionist.

Your Responsibilities as a Client

Consumers shall have the following responsibilities

1. You have a responsibility to give us complete information about your problems and pertinent circumstances.
2. You have a responsibility to play an active role in your treatment.
3. There are times when medication may be an appropriate treatment option. Medications are best used in conjunction with psychotherapy, as part of a medically supervised treatment plan. If medication is prescribed, you should be careful to follow the directions given. You have a responsibility to take medications prescribed, only as directed. Keep all medications out of the reach of children.
4. You have a responsibility to respect the confidentiality of other clients, and not to disclose to anyone outside Northeast Kingdom Human Services any information received in the course of participating in group, family, or couple treatment.
5. You are responsible to provide Northeast Kingdom Human Services with current and accurate insurance cards, or other verification of insurance, for photocopying or scanning.
6. You have a responsibility to pay your bill promptly.

Fees

Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS) is committed to ensuring timely access to medically necessary behavioral health services regardless of an individual's ability to pay. No person will be denied emergency, crisis, or medically necessary services due to an inability to pay. Financial information may be requested to determine eligibility for insurance coverage, public benefits, sliding fee discounts, or other payment assistance programs.

Clients are expected to participate in the financial screening process and are responsible for applicable copayments, deductibles, coinsurance amounts, or fees based on their ability to pay and the organization's Sliding Fee Discount Program. NKHS will work collaboratively with clients to establish reasonable payment arrangements when balances are owed. Outstanding balances will not prevent access to emergency, crisis, or medically necessary services.

The Board of Directors of Northeast Kingdom Human Services is committed to maintaining sound financial stewardship to support the delivery of high-quality mental health, substance use disorder, and developmental services throughout the community. While NKHS receives funding from federal, state, and local sources, reimbursement from insurance, public programs, and client payments remains an important component of sustaining services. NKHS strives to balance responsible financial management with its mission to ensure access to comprehensive, person-centered care for all individuals served.

Collection of Fees

Every client seen at Northeast Kingdom Human Services will be responsible for co-pay and/or a portion of his/her charges for each date of service. The type of health insurance determines what the client will pay out-of-pocket for services.

At the time of service, reception personnel will collect all current co-pay or self-pay amounts, plus any outstanding self-pay balances from prior dates of service.

If a client has insurance coverage, the carrier will be billed for the charges. Clients that do not have health insurance coverage will be evaluated at intake for immediate eligibility for the sliding scale and/or given a Medicaid application. Acceptable proof of income is needed for submission to the Billing Department.

If you find yourself with an outstanding balance, please contact our Billing Department to discuss possible payment arrangements.

Sliding Fee Scale

We have a limited amount of subsidy dollars to provide certain services to county residents who cannot afford to pay our full cost of service. You will need to keep these financial considerations in mind as you and your therapist plan your treatment. The sliding fee charged to the client is set using a standard percentage ranging from 15% to 100% of the standard charge. Gross household income and qualifying dependents will determine eligibility.

There are some circumstances where the sliding fee scale is not available and charges will be based on the full fee for services. These are:

1. When the client chooses not to use the mental health or intellectual and developmental disability service options available through his/her health insurance.
2. When the client does not inform Northeast Kingdom Human Services of insurance or changes to insurance in a timely manner.

Why do we ask for your gross annual income? We need this information to determine where your income/family size fall on our sliding fee scale. We use this sliding scale fee in the following scenarios:

- Consumer/client does not have insurance
- Consumer/client has not yet met their deductible
- Consumer/client's insurance coverage is interrupted
- When a service provided to a consumer/client is not covered by their insurance,

such as Community Supports or Service Planning and Coordination, that can be face-to-face or on the telephone.

These services are not covered by most private insurance companies. These are services provided to assist individuals and their families with access to community supports and develop social skills necessary to improve overall function.

These services may include assisting individuals and families in coordinating and monitoring services and supports needed.

If you have any questions about a balance due, or would like to discuss setting up a payment plan, we can arrange for you to speak with a representative from our Business Office.

Payment Involving Mandated Services

Northeast Kingdom Human Services will permit the use of the sliding fee scale in circumstances where services are mandated by an organization such as courts, schools, probation and parole, DCF, court diversion, etc. Reports that are required by the referral source (such as to verify that referral requirements or conditions have been met) may not be released until full payment of any balance is made.

Delinquent Accounts

Monthly payments are required on all accounts. Clients with outstanding balances will receive monthly statements.

Appointments

Initial appointments can be made by calling Northeast Kingdom Human Services in Newport, (802) 334-6744, or in St. Johnsbury, at (802) 748-3181. If you are more than fifteen minutes late to your appointment, your therapist may be unable to see you and may need to reschedule your appointment.

Missed Appointments

Northeast Kingdom Human Services is invested in your well-being and believes it is important for you to be consistent in treatment so progress can be made towards your identified treatment goals. A missed appointment, without adequate notice, results in someone else having to wait longer for an appointment.

- Clients are expected to call 24 hours in advance if they cannot make a scheduled appointment.
- After the second cancel/no show, the Agency will determine it necessary to cancel any standing future appointments with you.

- Your therapist may be directed to cancel individual treatment; however, you may be offered an alternative service such as group therapy. Emergency services will always remain available.

Authorizations for Release of Information

Please be advised that any releases you have signed will remain valid until their original expiration dates, which are typically one year from the date you sign them, even after your case is closed, unless revoked in writing.

Permission to Conduct Follow-Up

In order to evaluate our programs, NKHS periodically contacts individuals who have used our services. In order to assist with this evaluation, NKHS may contact you after leaving treatment by means of a mailed or electronic questionnaire. All applicable confidentiality protections will remain in effect.

Regular Office Hours

Monday and Friday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:00am-7:00pm

Except on holidays
The 24-hour Emergency Phone Number in St. Johnsbury is (802) 748-3181; in Newport is (802) 334-6744.

Northeast Kingdom Human Services has a 24-hour per day emergency number for residents of Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans Counties who are experiencing a mental health crisis. When our offices are closed your call will be routed to an answering service. The operator will take your call and the NKHS Emergency worker will get in touch with you as quickly as possible.

Service Agreement

This agreement is to assure that you understand the policies in effect at NKHS (Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc.). Your signature(s) on this form constitutes informed consent for assessment and other services offered by NKHS trained professional staff.

1. Accomplishing change during service provision is a mutual task. Both NKHS staff and you will work together to achieve an agreeable result.
2. During the course of service many issues may be important. Often subjects that may seem irrelevant will be discussed. Some issues that could possibly be dealt with include: personal adjustment, parenting skills, extended family, relationship difficulties, previous services, interests, marital adjustment, personal/family history, child rearing practices, hygiene, sexual adjustment, employment, living arrangements, employment history, health, nutrition, hospitalizations, drug/alcohol usage, available resources, finances, legal involvement, etc. Care should be exercised so that you disclose only what and as much as you wish NKHS staff members to know.
3. A team approach is used by NKHS. Information necessary to facilitate effective assessment and/or service provision may be shared between NKHS staff. Videotaping, audio taping and/or one-way mirror observation may be used to allow the NKHS team the best possible access in offering assistance, supervision, or education. If used, these methods would be applied only with your written consent to assure that you receive the highest quality services.
4. Your clinical record may be reviewed for certain purposes by representatives of Federal and State agencies such as: The National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the Vermont Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, and Vermont Department of Children and Families. Law requires that this information shall remain confidential and be used by these agencies for review purposes only. Evaluators of programs and services from NKHS may also, at times, use clinical records for review purposes.
5. If you are a client of our substance abuse services or a client with a substance abuse problem, your records and your confidentiality are further protected by Federal Regulation 42CFR part 2. Specific written consent is required to release information about you.
6. Information you share with NKHS staff is confidential. It will not be revealed outside NKHS without your consent. The rare exceptions to this policy are vital emergencies and/or legal situation(s):

    - Court order for disclosure
    - You commit or threaten a crime while on the premises or against NKHS personnel
    - All Staff members are required by law to report:
        - Suspected child abuse to the Vermont Department of Children and Families
        - Suspected abuse of the elderly or handicapped to the Department of

Aging and Independent Living

- If it is disclosed during our work with you that an individual, group, or property is at risk of injury or destruction, it must be reported to the police and/or the individual(s) who are threatened.
- If it becomes necessary, in NKHS' opinion, to protect the individual's safety by emergency hospitalization (commitment proceedings), we are obligated to discuss relevant information with the courts and/or Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital or its designee.

7. All customers have a legal right to appeal actions by NKHS staff. If you have a concern, please let your assigned staff or an NKHS supervisor know about it. All adults who will be involved in service must sign this agreement. Signature by parents/legal guardians constitutes consent for services to minors.
8. Any special condition, requirements, or exceptions agreed to.

Informed Consent and Explanation for the Use of Eleos

Welcome to Eleos!

At NKHS, we are committed to providing effective, collaborative, and compassionate care. To enhance your care and experience, we utilize Eleos, a secure, innovative platform that supports mental health professionals in streamlining documentation and focusing on your care. This document explains how Eleos works, your rights, and the safeguards to protect your privacy.

What is Eleos?

Eleos is an advanced technology platform designed to assist clinicians in documenting client sessions efficiently and accurately. Eleos allows your therapist to focus entirely on delivering meaningful, personalized care by reducing the administrative burden.

How Eleos Works

- Session Documentation: Eleos helps clinicians draft progress notes after each session by generating clinically relevant suggestions based on real-time input related to the conversation, goals, and action plans. This documentation helps clinicians track your progress and identify areas of improvement.
- Real-Time Updates: Using audio capture, your provider may update notes during the session to ensure they reflect your current needs. Based on real-time input, audio is transformed into compliant and clinically relevant suggestions. All generated suggestions are unique to the individual session and are reviewed and edited before finalizing the note. No audio is recorded or stored.
- Security and Confidentiality: Eleos does not record or store session conversations to ensure your privacy and confidentiality.

Benefits for You

1. **Clear Communication:** Eleos's documentation process ensures your progress, and the next steps are identified and communicated to you.
2. **Streamlined Care:** With Eleos, your mental health care team can coordinate seamlessly, providing holistic and comprehensive care.
3. **Goal Tracking:** You can stay informed about your mental health journey, track your goals, and receive feedback from your provider about how you're doing.

Your Role in the Process

1. **Active Participation:** Your therapist will conduct your session as they usually do. Engage fully to help your therapist accurately document your needs and progress.
2. **Collaborate on Goals:** Work with your therapist to set and review your goals.
3. **Ask Questions:** If you have concerns about documentation or the process, ask your provider for clarification.

Our Commitment to Quality and Ethics Privacy and Confidentiality

ELEOS adheres to strict privacy guidelines to protect your personal and health information:

- **HIPAA Compliant:** Eleos fully complies with HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), ensuring all your health data remains private and secure
- **No Third-Party Access:** Your information is accessible only to the professionals directly involved in your care.

Accuracy and Accountability

NKHS staff are responsible for ensuring that all documentation, whether Eleos assisted or manual, is accurate and compliant with ethical and regulatory standards. Supervisors regularly review documentation for quality and adherence to these principles.

Your Rights

- **Informed Consent:** You have the right to be fully informed about Eleos, its role, and its benefits
- **Choice:** You can choose to accept or decline the use of Eleos. If declined, your therapist will manually complete the documentation.
- **Withdrawal of Consent:** You may withdraw your consent at any time without impacting the care you receive.

Accuracy and Accountability

NKHS staff are responsible for ensuring that all documentation, whether Eleos assisted or manual, is accurate, unbiased, and compliant with ethical and regulatory standards. Supervisors regularly review documentation for quality and adherence to these principles.

Ethical Use

NKHS is dedicated to using Eleos responsibly, prioritizing your confidentiality, privacy, and dignity. Prohibited Use Eleos is used exclusively for drafting documentation, outreach support, and training. Eleos does not diagnose, create treatment plans, or provide clinical decision-making.

Questions or Concerns?

If you have questions or concerns about Eleos or how it's used:

- Speak directly with your therapist.
- Contact our Compliance Officer.

Thank you for trusting NKHS. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Consumer Complaint, Grievance and Appeal Process

You have the right to file a grievance or appeal if you are dissatisfied with your treatment or services. NKHS cannot treat you poorly or deny you services as a result of filing a grievance or an appeal.

You can file a complaint with any NKHS staff member

What is a Complaint?

There may come a time when you are not satisfied with your service and you want to address your concerns. You can speak with any staff member about a complaint you have. A complaint will be handled within NKHS. If you are not satisfied with the NKHS response, you can then file a formal grievance. You do not need to file a complaint before filing a grievance.

You have a right to file a grievance without retailiation

- You are dissatisfied about aspects of interpersonal relations - rudeness, failure to be respected, staff not conducting themselves properly or the quality of care you are receiving.
    - The complaint is resolved in one response by NKHS staff.
- Complaints may be made orally or in writing by the consumer to any NKHS staff.

What is a Grievance?

You can ask any staff for information or assistance

A grievance is a way to report an issue with the quality of your services. Grievances are reported to the Department of Mental Health or to DAIL. Examples might include:

- Staff was rude to you
- You received poor service
- Service is not meeting your needs
- You don't have choices in your services
- You disagree with a rule or a policy
- You disagree with what is in your treatment plan

There is no time limit to file a grievance

There is no time limit to file a grievance.

What is an Appeal?

An appeal is a way to report your disagreement with a decision or an action. This is different from a grievance.

- You are denied a service
- You are denied entry to a program
- You do not agree that something should be re-moved from your services.

You have 60 days to file an appeal

You have 60 days to file an appeal.

How Do I File a Grievance or an Appeal?

You may file a grievance or appeal orally or in writing. Any staff who provides your

services can assist you. A form is not required, but if you choose, you can use the Grievance Form available from NKHS. You may also contact the Grievance and Appeals Coordinator at NKHS.

When Will I Hear Back? NKHS must acknowledge your grievance or appeal, in writing, within 5 days. Grievances must be resolved, with written notification, within 90 days. Appeals must be resolved, with written notification, within 30 days. If your rights are being violated, NKHS is not following timelines, or you need further assistance, please contact the Department of Mental Health at 802-241-0090.

Where Can I Get More Information?

Amy Jones, NKHS Compliance Officer and Grievance Appeals Coordinator (802) 334-6744. Email ajones@nkhs.net

NKHS Website: NKHS.org

Department of Mental Health website:

htttp://mentalhealthvermont.gov/about/grievance

Client No Show Policy

Our Commitment

At NKHS, we are committed to supporting your well-being and helping you make meaningful progress toward your treatment goals. Consistent participation in services is an important part of successful treatment. We understand that unexpected circumstances can arise, and we strive to work collaboratively with clients and families to address barriers that may impact attendance.

This policy is designed to promote engagement in services while ensuring appointment availability for all individuals seeking care.

Appointment Cancellations

If you are unable to attend a scheduled appointment, please notify NKHS at least **24 hours in advance** whenever possible.

Providing advance notice allows your appointment time to be offered to another individual waiting for services.

No-Shows and Late Cancellations

A **no-show** occurs when a client does not attend a scheduled appointment and does not notify the agency.

A **late cancellation** occurs when a client cancels an appointment less than 24 hours before the scheduled time.

Attendance Support and Outreach

NKHS recognizes that missed appointments may occur for many reasons, including transportation difficulties, work schedules, illness, family emergencies, weather conditions, childcare needs, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Because attendance concerns are often related to barriers that we may be able to support, NKHS will make reasonable efforts to support engagement before considering closure of services.

After One Missed Appointment

- NKHS will attempt to contact you to reschedule the appointment.

- Attendance expectations and any barriers to participation can be discussed.
- NKHS will offer support from a care coordinator to help support you in addressing barriers where possible.

After Two Missed Appointments within a 90-Day Period (or exceeding 20%)

- The treatment team will review attendance concerns with you.
- Your treatment team will discuss barriers with you that may be affecting attendance and identify possible solutions.
- Alternative scheduling options may be offered to help support you.

Ongoing Attendance Concerns

After two missed appointments, recurring appointments may be modified or discontinued. You may be offered alternative scheduling arrangements, including:

- Same-day appointments
- Walk in appointments
- Reduced scheduling frequency
- Attendance support plans
- Other individualized scheduling options developed collaboratively with the treatment team

Same-Day Scheduling Option

If you are experiencing difficulty attending regularly scheduled appointments may be asked to use same-day scheduling.

You may call on the day services are needed to determine whether an appointment is available with their provider. Availability cannot be guaranteed and is based on provider schedules.

Returning to Services

If your recurring appointments have been discontinued due to attendance concerns you may return to regular scheduling after successfully attending one same day or walk in appointment within 30 days.

Non-Engagement and Service Closure

If you have had multiple missed appointments and NKHS is unable to re-establish contact despite documented outreach efforts:

- A written notification will be sent to you.
- The letter will request contact with NKHS within 10 days to discuss continued services.
- If no response is received, the treatment team will proceed with closing services.

Inclement Weather

During severe weather conditions or hazardous road conditions, you should contact NKHS as soon as possible if you are unable to attend an appointment.

Weather-related cancellations will not be considered a no-show or late cancellation when you notify NKHS that weather conditions are preventing attendance. Attempts will be made when possible to transition to telehealth, if applicable.

Psychiatric Services

If you are receiving psychiatric medication management services, ongoing participation in therapy, case management, or another clinically appropriate support service may be required to support safe and effective treatment. Your provider will discuss these expectations with you.

Questions

If you have questions about this policy or are experiencing challenges attending appointments, please speak with your provider. NKHS is committed to working with you to identify solutions that support ongoing participation in services.

THE NUMBERS TO CALL FOR CANCELLATIONS:

Newport is (802) 334-6744

St. Johnsbury is (802) 748-3181.

NKHS Crisis Services remain available 24 hours a day. You can access Crisis Services by calling the above numbers or 988.

Medicaid Services

Take steps to assure you have medical insurance coverage!

Medicaid and Qualified Health Plan enrollment assistance is available through the local hospitals or Vermont Health Connect Customer Support Center.

Community Connections

St. Johnsbury, VT

802-748-7256

North Country Hospital

Newport, VT
802-334-3210, ext. 7606

Customer Support Center

Vermont
1-855-899-9600
Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Remember! The following information is needed to enroll or re-enroll:

- Social Security numbers and birth dates for all household members
- Paystubs
- Taxes
- Proof of immigration status if not an American Citizen

Controlled Substance Agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to protect your access to controlled substances and to protect our ability to prescribe medications for you. This agreement may be modified at the discretion of your prescribing clinician and upon mutual agreement.

1. All prescriptions for controlled substances must come from Northeast Kingdom Human Services unless specific authorization is obtained. All controlled substances must be obtained from the same pharmacy. If you need to change pharmacies you must notify NKHS. Prescriptions for controlled drugs will be given directly to you at NKHS, phoned to the pharmacy or mailed to the pharmacy. Prescriptions will NOT be mailed directly to you.
2. I am expected to inform NKHS of any new medication or medical conditions and to inform my Primary Care Provider of any changes in medications by NKHS.
3. I may not share, sell, trade, or exchange my medication for money, goods, services, etc., or otherwise permit others to have access to these medications. I agree to keep these medications in a secure, preferably locked location.
4. I will not attempt to get psychiatric medications from any other health care provider without telling them that I am taking psychiatric medication prescribed by NKHS.
5. I agree to provide NKHS legal releases sufficient to allow the prescribing provider to discuss all diagnostic details and treatment details with my pharmacist or other professionals who provide my health care.
6. Unannounced, random urine or blood tests may be required by NKHS to determine my compliance with this agreement. Tests may include screening for illegal substances. Presence of unauthorized substances may prompt referral for assessment for addictive disorder. Refusal of testing may subject me to prompt termination of the controlled medication.
7. I will not alter my medication in any way (such as crushing, chewing tablets, snorting or injecting crushed medication). I may be asked to bring my medications to NKHS or to my pharmacy for pill counts.
8. Using illegal substances (i.e., cocaine, heroin, marijuana, crystal methamphetamine, ecstasy, ketamine, etc.) while being treated with controlled substances is a serious treatment issue and may prompt changes in your treatment. This may result in stopping prescription of any controlled substances.
9. I understand that changing date, quantity, or strength of my medications, or changing a prescription in any way is a violation of the law. If NKHS becomes aware of a law violation it may be reported to the patient's pharmacy. Further, NKHS will cooperate with law enforcement as allowed in any subsequent investigation.
10. I will discontinue all previously used psychiatric medications, unless told to continue them by NKHS. I will keep NKHS informed of all medications I may receive from other providers—this includes the Emergency Department at a hospital, if being treated. I also agree to inform other providers that I am under a controlled substance agreement with NKHS.

11. Females only: If I plan to become pregnant or believe I am pregnant, I will notify my OB provider and NKHS. I am aware that there is a risk of birth defects when a pregnant woman takes some psychiatric medications, including anti-anxiety medications and ADHD medications.
12. No early refills will be given. Refills will not be given out early if I run out, lose my prescription, damage my prescription, or if it or my medicine is stolen. Refills may not be given if I miss an appointment.
13. I agree to take my medication in the exact way it is prescribed, not to increase the rate of consumption on my own. I am responsible for taking it as prescribed and to keep track of the amount remaining. No unauthorized increases in medication will be tolerated.

Dominion Diagnostics Acknowledgement

To all clients of Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc.:

Dominion Diagnostics and/or Aegis Labs provides all diagnostic laboratory-urine drug testing services for Northeast Kingdom Humans Services, Inc.

Dominion Diagnostics and/or Aegis Labs are medical laboratories that are participating providers in Vermont Medicaid and will directly bill Vermont Blue Cross/Blue Shield and many other private insurers in Vermont.

Dominion Diagnostics and/or Aegis Labs bills your insurance company directly for tests ordered by Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc. If you have a laboratory co-payment or deductible as part of your insurance plan, you will be billed for these co-pay/deductible costs.

If you do not have insurance coverage, and your fee for treatment is reduced by Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc., you will be billed directly by Dominion Diagnostic and/or Aegis Labs for lab services at a discounted rate. If at any time you need to discuss payment or have questions regarding your lab bill, please call us toll free at 1-877-734-9600.

In order for Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc. to participate in the Dominion Diagnostics and/or Aegis Labs, we will be sharing your information electronically with Dominion Diagnostics and/or Aegis Labs.

Health and Safety

Weapons

At NKHS firearms, knives, explosives, and other instruments or materials considered to be lethal or capable of inducing severe bodily injury shall not be brought into any NKHS premise, including personal vehicles while parked on NKHS property, or while being used in the line of duty, to NKHS.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all NKHS facilities. Additionally, Employees and Consumers are discouraged from smoking anywhere on owned or operated NKHS premises.

Smoking is prohibited in one's automobile and in NKHS vehicles when transporting individuals that receive services or during any NKHS activity or program where consumers are present, whether on or off NKHS premises.

Illegal or Illicit Drug Use

The illegal possession, use, or distribution of controlled substances, including alcohol, is prohibited at NKHS.

Health and Safety of Staff and Clients

NKHS follows all Center for Disease Control (CDC), Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Agency (VOSHA) and State recommended guidelines to ensure the physical and mental health safety of staff and clients. At times, best practice guidelines will be implemented to ensure the unique needs of those providing and accessing services at NKHS are met.

Custody/Guardianship Documentation

Custody is obtained by biological parents or is a family court order that allows someone to care for a minor child.

Guardianship is a court order which allows similar powers to a parent or another person with custody. Guardianship may be used when both parents pass away or when both parents do not have the physical or mental capacity to care for their child any longer. Guardianship can also be used in the case of an adult who, due to illness, injury, or disability, is unable to care for himself or herself.

NKHS is required to obtain documentation of any court ordered custody or guardianship order in order that is in place for an individual receiving services to disclose information and allow for decision making abilities on behalf of the individual receiving services. Without this documentation, NKHS will only communicate with the individual receiving services and cannot disclose information to any other parties or provide treatment other than requested by the individual.

For more information please visits https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/probate/adult- guardianships

for Adults (over 18 years of age)

Or https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/probate/minor-guardianships for children

Advance Directives

We each have the right to make our own health care decisions. An advance directive ensures your end of life and other critical healthcare decisions will be honored.

An advance directive is what many people think of as a living will, or a durable power of attorney for health care. An advance directive is a written document that outlines your wishes for medical treatment in the future, including if you are no longer able to make those decisions.

HAVING AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE GIVES YOU:

- Peace of mind, knowing that your choices are secure and will be available to your family and doctors even if you become ill away from home.
- The serenity of knowing that you will be able to "speak" to your family and doctors through your Advance Directive about your personal philosophy and help them make the decisions you want without feeling guilt or remorse.
- The security of confidential, 24-hour access to your choices by hospitals and health care providers across the country.

NKHS will request a copy of your Advance Directives if you have one in place. If you do not and wish to create one, NKHS staff will support you!

More information can be found at https://www.healthvermont.gov/systems/advance-directives

Professional Qualifications

NKHS can provide up to date information about the qualifications and work experience for each of our professional staff. This information is available upon request to anyone seeking or currently utilizing NKHS services.

NKHS Program Standing Committees

The mission of NKHS is to empower individuals, families, and communities by promoting hope, healing, and support.

Every challenge is unique. At NKHS individuals and families identify their own goals and receive support from professionals to identify the best path to achieving those goals. Services are tailored to the individual.

Adult Services will help clients find recovery and well-being whether the concern is depression, anxiety, grief and loss, bi-polar disorder, addiction, or any combination of other significant mental health or addiction issues.

Intellectual/Developmental Disability Services relies on a consumer-centered approach to identify the goals and types of support needed to help individuals with intellectual/developmental challenges using their unique strengths. Services take into account the whole person, addressing medical and mental health needs, tailored to the individual.

Children, Youth & Family Services understands families may have concerns for a child of any age with stressful behaviors, limited attention in the classroom, or risky behaviors. NKHS relies on a family-centered approach to work with families and children to achieve their vision of optimum child development, leading to a healthy adulthood.

Program Standing Committees

Disclosed clients, their family members, and/or community members who have an interest in any of these service divisions could volunteer to be on a Program Standing Committee.

Meetings are held once a month for 60 to 90 minutes. Meetings are currently being held by Zoom conference due to the pandemic. We hope to meet in person again soon. Please contact one of the committee representatives if you are interested in attending.

If you or a family member are interested in serving on a Standing Committee, please call one of our toll-free or local numbers. We are available to answer questions and provide you with further information. We can provide reimbursement for mileage to attend the meetings. Light refreshments are also available at the meetings.

Program Standing Committee Meeting Schedule:

Children's Standing Committee
First Monday of the month: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Addiction Services Standing Committee
Second Monday of the month: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Adult Mental Health Standing Committee
Fourth Wednesday of the month: 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Developmental Disability Services Standing Committee
Fourth Wednesday of the month: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Other Services

Genoa Healthcare (866)-763-2250

NKHS has collaborated with Genoa to provide on-site pharmacies at both our Newport and St. Johnsbury locations.

The on-site, full-service pharmacy is staffed by a pharmacist and certified technician(s). The pharmacy team is dedicated to staff and consumers and are available for questions or prior authorizations. Genoa is proud to serve NKHS clients, employees, their families, and the surrounding community with their prescription and immunization needs.

Genoa offers:

- Full-service pharmacy, fills all medications
- Pharmacy team that integrates with center staff
- Pre-filled pill organizer
- Delivery/mail options
- Prior authorization assistance
- Refill synchronization
- Reminder calls

Please contact Genoa Healthcare directly for assistance.

Newport location: (802) 239-1593

St. Johnsbury location: (802) 227-2293

802 QUITS

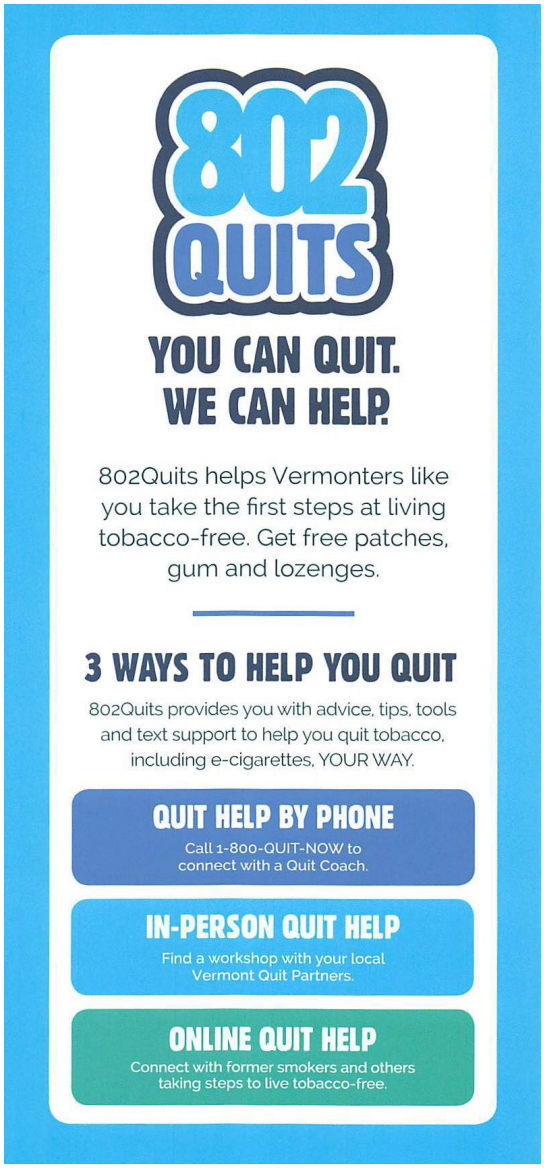
YOU CAN QUIT. WE CAN HELP.

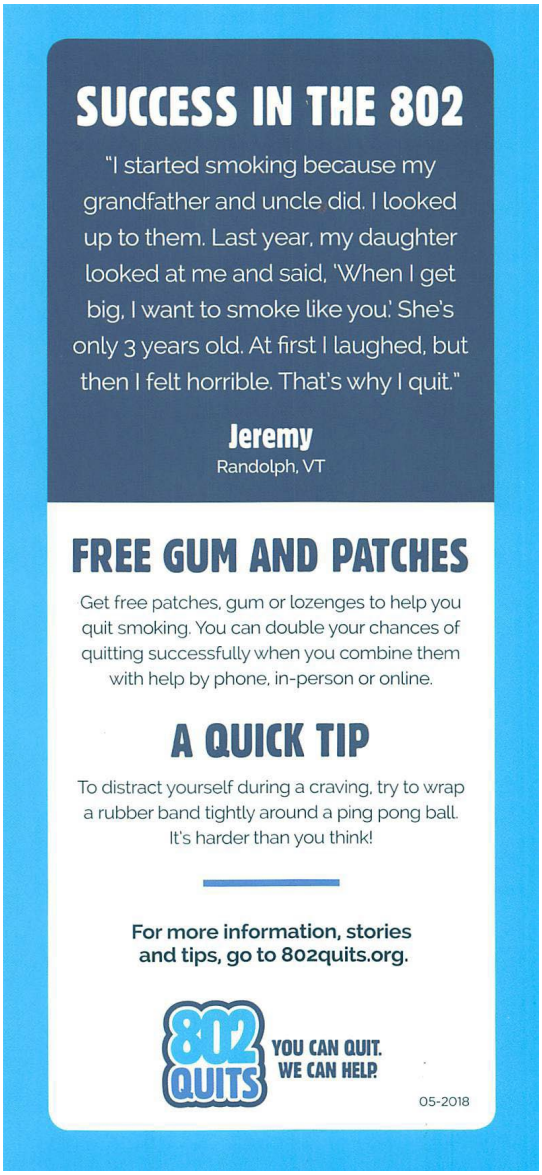
www.802quits.org

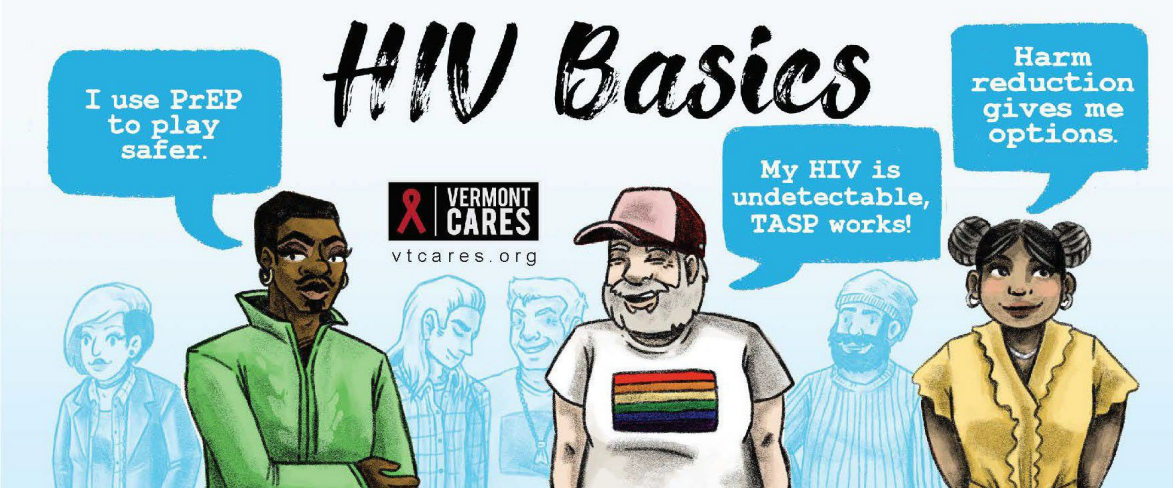
(800) 784-8669

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) 802Quits.org

Your chances of quitting are much better when you have a customized quit plan. Start now. Positive, supportive help. Free and confidential. Call, enroll online, text and more. You can quit. Help is here. **1-800-QUIT-NOW**. www.802quits.org Free support. Types: By phone, in person, online.







HIV - Treatable & Preventable

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) attacks CD4/helper cells/T-cells. This creates opportunity in the body for other infections to take hold; like pneumonia, cancer, tuberculosis, flu, meningitis, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs.)

HIV Is Passed Through These Body Fluids...

- **Blood**
- **Semen (Cum)**
- **Pre-cum (pre-seminal fluid)**
- **Vaginal/Front Hole Fluid**
- **Breast milk**
- **Anal Fluid**

...And also there must be:

- **HIV present in the fluid**
- **A detectable HIV viral load**
- **Entry into the other person's blood stream through a cut, sore, or mucous membrane (genitals, anus, eyes, nose, mouth)**



Undetectable = Untransmittable
Through medication, people with consistent undetectable viral load for 6 months do not transmit HIV. Ask your healthcare provider for more information.

Call Us For Support

VERMONT CARES
1-800-649-2437
Burlington, St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, and Rutland, VT + Mobile

Pride Center of Vermont
802-860-7812
Burlington, VT
Vermont Diversity Health Project | VDHP.org

HIV/HCV Resource Center
603-448-8887
Lebanon, NH

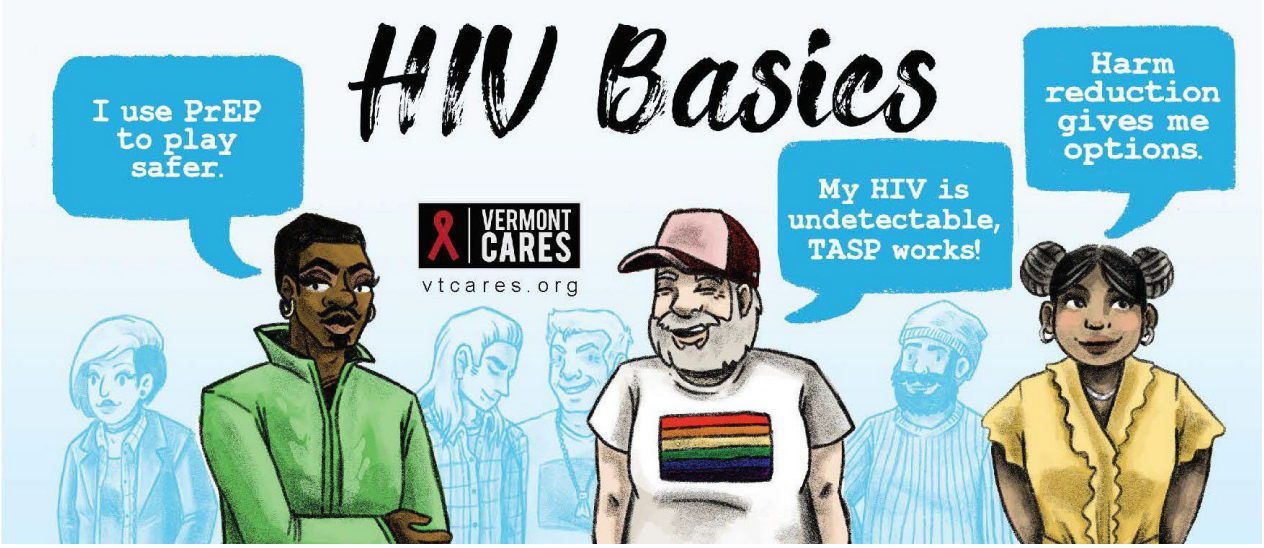
AIDS Project of Southern Vermont
802-254-8263 | *Brattleboro, VT*
802-447-8007 | *Bennington, VT*

Know Your Status?

We Offer Free HIV and HCV Fingerstick Testing!

*** You can also get a blood draw test through a healthcare provider!*

VERMONT CARES vtcares.org
ODC OPEN DOOR CLINIC opendoormidd.org



Talk To Your Partners About Sex

how frequently do you hookup? how do you meet your partners?

when were you last tested for STIs?

do you give (top) or receive (bottom) or both?*

*bottoming increases exposure

what are your safer sex practices?

any sexual health issues or concerns?

Language: "Clean", "Dirty", and "Drug / Disease Free (DDF)" perpetuate HIV stigma. Use consent and non-shaming language to discuss sexual practices.

The Primary Ways HIV Spreads in the US are...

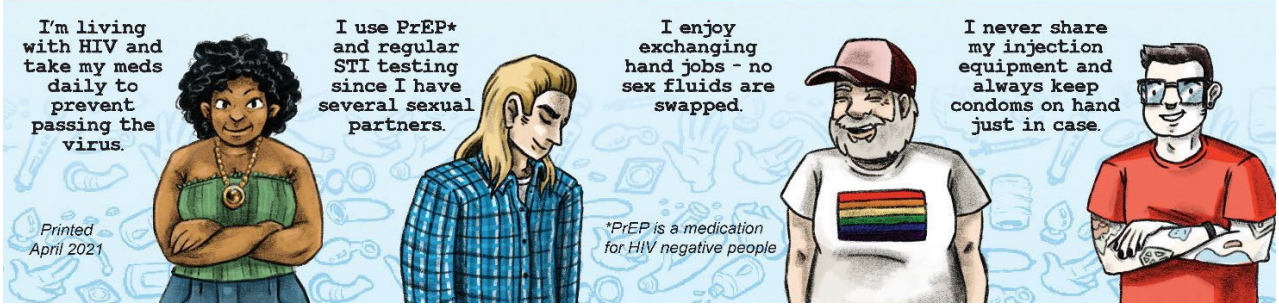




HIV and Harm Reduction

- Take PrEP*
- Use condoms/barriers
- Lube, lube, lube!
- Change positions while playing
- Choose sex activity like masturbation, oral sex, or massage
- Get tested for and treat STIs
- Limit casual sex partners
- Maintain body awareness (avoid pain or discomfort)

- Know your limits for substance use and drinking
- Use and promote Syringe Service Programs (SSP)
- Rotate injection sites and veins
- Use your own new kits and supplies and don't share
- Personalize syringes so you know which are yours
- Drink plenty of water
- Test for Hepatitis C (HCV) when you test for HIV





On July 16, 2022, Vermont joined the rest of the United States in launching **988**, the new three-digit number for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. This service provides compassionate, accessible care and supports for anyone experiencing mental health related distress. The chat feature will be available through the Lifeline's website located at 988Lifeline (https://988lifeline.org/)

ABOUT 988

- Vermont's Suicide Prevention Lifeline answers calls, chats, and texts that come from residents throughout the state.
- Vermont has two Certified Lifeline Centers. These centers are staffed and run by two designated agencies: Northeast Kingdom Human Services and Northwestern Counseling and Support Services.
- Lifeline counselors receive extensive training and are there to listen and support callers through their distress while providing coping skills.
- Vermont's Lifeline Center calls, texts, and chats are backed up by neighboring states and the national network. If a local center isn't immediately available, the individual will be routed quickly to another counselor.
- Access is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 remains live and can still be used.
- Vermont Lifeline counselors are trained to reduce stress, provide emotional support, and connect you with anyone in distress to local resources.
- If you or someone you know is in imminent danger, call 911.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



Additional Resources

Vermont Department of Mental Health:
www.mentalhealth.vermont.gov

Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living:
www.mentalhealth.vermont.gov

Vermont Agency of Human Services:
www.humanservices.vermont.gov

Advance Directives:
www.vtethicsnetwork.org

Vermont Department of Children & Families:
http://dcf.vermont.gov/

Vermont Center for Independent Living
http://www.vcil.org

North Country Hospital
NorthCountryHospital.org

Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital
https://nvrh.org

Rural Edge
https://ruraledge.org

Northeast Kingdom Community Action
https://www.nekcavt.org

Northeast Kingdom Learning Services
https://neklsvt.org

NAMI
https://namivt.org

Facing Suicide VT
https://facingsuicidevt.com

Agency Contact Information

St. Johnsbury Office:

2225 Portland Road St. Johnsbury, VT
(802) 748-3181

Toll free 1-800-649-0118

Automated line for pharmacy, staff extensions, and medication refill lines:
802-748-0215

Mailing Address:

PO Box 368 St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Derby/Newport Office:

181 Crawford Road Derby, VT
(802) 334-6744

Toll free 1-800-696-4979

Automated line for pharmacy, staff extensions, and medication refill lines:
802-334-7451

Mailing Address:

PO Box 724 Newport, Vermont, 05855

General Information (802) 334-6744