



State of Vermont

Department of Mental Health
166 Horseshoe Drive, Weeks Building
Waterbury, VT 05671-2010
<http://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/>

Agency of Human Services

[phone] 802-241-0090
[fax] 802-241-0100
[tty] 800-253-0191

MEMORANDUM

TO: State of Vermont Public Utilities Commission

FROM: Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health

DATE: 10/17/2024

RE: Comment on Draft Clean Heat Standard Rule

The Department of Mental Health is concerned that an increased cost for heating fuel due to the proposed rule may negatively impact vulnerable Vermonters' mental health.

As heat is an essential need in Vermont, rising heating costs have significant implications for mental health across communities. The inability to maintain a safe and warm living environment can lead to feelings of helplessness and isolation. As affordability decreases, individuals and families face heightened stress and anxiety related to financial instability.

Vulnerable populations, including those currently experiencing mental health conditions, low-income families, and the elderly, are particularly at risk as they may lack the resources to cope with challenges resulting from or exacerbated by an increase in heating costs or by the cost and stress of trying to transition to a new system. Maintaining affordability of essential needs is crucial not only for physical health but also for the mental well-being of our communities.

DocuSigned by:

Emily Hawes

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Commissioner, Department of Mental Health

