



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Gov. Shumlin, Commissioner Chen announce award to Vermont of nearly \$10 million to fight substance abuse



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BURLINGTON – Gov. Peter Shumlin and Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD, announced today that the Vermont Department of Health will receive a five-year, \$9.9 million grant from the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** to increase early intervention and treatment of young adults at risk for substance abuse. Vermont is one of only five states in the nation selected to receive the 2013 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services award.

The funds will be distributed through 2018 to help identify, reduce and prevent alcohol and illicit drug dependence and abuse through early screening and intervention. The project is focused on young adults between the ages of 18-25, who have lower incomes, less formal education, are less likely to access behavioral health services, and have a high rate of misuse of alcohol and other drugs.

“Substance abuse is one of the most serious problems facing Vermont, a threat that drives up crimes rates in communities and destroys the lives of too many of our neighbors and family members,” the Governor said. Earlier this year, he signed into law a package of changes to strengthen law enforcement initiatives and prevention and treatment options.

“This \$10 million grant will allow my administration to continue its focus on preventing and reducing addiction, as well as fighting the crime linked to addiction that tears communities apart,” Gov. Shumlin said. “The timing of the federal support couldn’t be better.”

“Acting on early warning signs of addiction, before it becomes a life-long problem, is a core mission of public health,” said Health Commissioner Chen, MD. “This grant will enable us to fill an unmet need for an estimated 18,000 people each year who may otherwise not have received help.”

Fletcher Allen Healthcare, Vermont National Guard’s Medical Center, the University of Vermont Student Health Center, and Central Vermont Medical Center primary care clinics will be involved in implementation of the grant, as will primary care and other medical providers across the state. Training to better identify warning signs of substance abuse will also be provided by the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

The other four states receiving a 2013 SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral and Treatment) grant are New Mexico, South Carolina, Ohio, and New York.

For more information about the substance abuse prevention and treatment go to healthvermont.gov

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