

AGENCY OF EDUCATION

Barre, Vermont

TEAM: School Finance

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant initial tutorial approval to Valley Vista's H.O.P.E. Program in Vergennes, VT, to serve a maximum of nine residential females, ages 13 to 17 years of age, struggling with co-occurring stressors/behaviors?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants initial tutorial approval to Valley Vista's H.O.P.E. Program in Vergennes, VT, to serve a maximum of nine residential females, ages 13 to 17 years of age, struggling with co-occurring stressors/behaviors. This approval is for two years, through June 30, 2018.

This approval is also subject to the condition that the tutorial immediately report to the Agency of Education whenever any changes occur in policies, programs, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §828

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Valley Vista operates a residential treatment center in Bradford, VT, which is designed to serve adolescent and adult male and female clients, who are in need of alcohol and drug detoxification as well as rehabilitation program services. Valley Vista is opening a new program called H.O.P.E. for adolescents and young adults that have completed a higher level of care and are in need of a residential setting to begin to use the already developed skills they have learned to cope with their previously diagnosed mental health stressors/behaviors. H.O.P.E. is an acronym for Helping Others Pursue Empowerment.
2. The H.O.P.E. Program is licensed by the Department for Children & Families Services (DCF) as a residential treatment facility. At the time of its opening, H.O.P.E. will not be contracted with the state. The adolescent program will serve the entire state of Vermont and out of state patients. The census will be composed of privately insured and private pay in state and out of state patients.
3. The adolescent ages of 13 to 17 years of age must participate in the tutorial program as soon after admission as they are deemed medically and clinically able to participate and benefit. The average length of stay in the program will be up to 90 days.

4. On behalf of the Secretary of Education, Chris Case visited the site in Vergennes on June 3, 2015.
5. The H.O.P.E. Program will be located in a former nursing home in Vergennes. The dining room will function as the tutorial classroom. Adjacent to the dining room is an office that will be utilized by those tutorial students who are receiving independent tutorial services and homework as well as individual assessment and lesson planning. The facility was granted a Certificate of Occupancy by the Division of Fire Safety.
6. Upon admission, or when possible prior to admission, the Program will inform the school district of the adolescents admission to the program. When a H.O.P.E. patient has dropped out of school, or when for any other reason there is no current school district of record, the tutorial program will use pre-assessment and early-treatment assessments as a guide to providing age/ability appropriate instruction. The program has available such assessment tools, textbooks, worksheets, and academic curriculum materials as are needed to generate and support educational plans for adolescent patients who have dropped out of school or whose school district fails to furnish plans and materials for their students who are admitted to H.O.P.E. The tutorial component of the program will operate during the traditional academic school year—September to June. The tutorial will be in session each week throughout the ten-month tutorial year, and closed only for individual major holidays.
7. The H.O.P.E. Program will be staffed by an Education Program Coordinator, a VT licensed special educator, and subject area teachers in science, math, social studies, and English. The Education Program Coordinator is responsible for supervising and overseeing the teaching staff, coordinating efforts with the school districts of record, coordinating with H.O.P.E.'s professional staff, participating in patient treatment planning/treatment plan reviews, and maintaining records. The special educator will be responsible for providing direct service per the adolescent's IEP, and meeting with the other educational staff members around curriculum and accommodations that may be needed.
8. The H.O.P.E. Program has implemented confidentiality of student records policies and procedures consistent with federal and state law. The tutorial program maintains a register of the daily attendance for each adolescent and reports the attendance to the responsible school district.
9. The H.O.P.E. Program has developed policies for admissions, discipline, and significant change in placement. Admission, and transfer internally from detoxification level of care to the residential level of care will be in accord with the Patient Criteria of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Referral to the program must be authorized by a licensed physician, licensed psychologist, or licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor.
10. Valley Vista has provided adequate evidence of financial capacity in the form of the prior fiscal year audit, prepared by the accounting firm of Kittell, Branagan & Sargent,

Certified Public Accountants. A review of the audit raised no concerns regarding financial capacity.

COST IMPLICATIONS: none

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