

A Message from the Commissioner

Welcome to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living Annual Report for 2017. As always, we at the Department are proud of the work we have accomplished on behalf of Vermonters. We are honored by the trust placed in us to set the pace for inclusion, independence and choice, and we are grateful for our partnerships with community providers, families and the people we serve, who push us to continue to strive towards excellence.

This has been a year to celebrate successes. In February 2017, the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) and its partners were recognized by the Zero Project at its 2017 conference held at the United Nations in Vienna, Austria. The Zero Project works for a world with zero barriers for people with disabilities. Vermont received the “Innovative Policy 2017 on Employment, Work, and Vocational Education,” international recognition for Vermont’s commitment to competitive employment in our communities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Our Long- Term Services and Supports system earned Vermont the inaugural PaceSetter Award from the SCAN Foundation and AARP. Our Survey and Certification Unit received a perfect score from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for our survey and investigation work, ensuring quality and safety in nursing facilities across the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired successfully migrated to a new software platform designed to support their transition to a focus on careers and professional credentialing for individuals with disabilities entering or re-entering the workforce. We also kicked off our Linking Learning to Careers Grant, ensuring that we help Vermont’s high school population transition successfully into higher education or the workforce.

Our system also faces challenges. The continuum of care we have built relies on a stable, trained and effective workforce- from personal care attendants to home providers to registered nurses and clinicians. Addressing the need to expand and enhance our Vermont labor pool presents opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and older workers, as well as challenges to ensure an adequate number of workers to meet our state’s needs. As we work to meet people’s needs, we also seek to re-frame the narrative and the conversations

about older Vermonters and Vermonters with disabilities to focus on capacity, ability, strength and purpose.

At DAIL, we must hold ourselves accountable, measure the outcomes we are able to achieve and work to improve process and practice. Our Scorecard work remains a priority, and we are proud this year to expand our use of the National Core Indicators consumer surveys across adult services and developmental disabilities services.

DAIL staff remain the heart and soul of our work across the state. Dedicated, compassionate, professional and innovative, they strive every day to represent our values and philosophy in meeting the needs of Vermonters. We are fortunate to have leadership at every level of state government which recognizes the importance of inclusion and independence, and to be able to rely on our partnerships with community providers to deliver a system of care which truly honors choice and community.

In anticipation of another great year,



Monica Caserta Hutt
DAIL Commissioner