Re: Support for conditional use request at the Lyndonville Development Review Board

Lyndonville Development Review Board:

I am writing in support of Northeast Kingdom Human Services Mental Health Urgent Care and Crisis Support Services proposed at 48 Elm Street in Lyndonville. We support the below program and recognize it as a vital support of the residents of the NEK.

**Project Proposal:**

Individuals experiencing a mental health crisis need access to comfortable, safe, and supportive spaces for care to align with their needs instead of making their first stop a hospital Emergency Department (ED). This project would provide a safe “Front Porch” welcome for therapeutic crisis stabilization utilizing trained professionals and peer specialists, trauma-informed care, and partnerships in the community to support those individuals. Without true “no wrong door” crisis services, law enforcement often becomes the community-based mental health crisis responders. As a result, our communities experience higher rates of incarceration among individuals experiencing mental health crises, ED crowding, and increased utilization of more restrictive and more expensive levels of care. Lower levels of care that align better with the person’s needs are not currently available. Without this NEK Front Porch program, individuals will simply fail to get what they need.

This first-of-its-kind clinically best practice pilot model would support and add value, fill hospital diversion gaps, and be a statewide resource in the continuum of care. This coincides with DMH’s philosophy to seek ways to increase therapeutic capacity without EDs as a first stop for those in mental health crises. The mission of this approach is for persons in distress to receive immediate, safe access to a continuum of crisis response services and to equip them with skills that will enable them to minimize or avert future crises. The pilot design would allow cost-effective programming to remain malleable to meet ongoing needs determined by clinically derived evidence based practices, community, and state feedback. The NEK and the state need this pilot project to provide less expensive programming as proof of concept to incorporate the model in the work Vermont is already doing by investing in upstream prevention initiatives due to the possible reduction in downstream resources.

Sincerely,

[Insert name]

[Insert Title]

[Insert Organization name]