

GMSS REPORTER

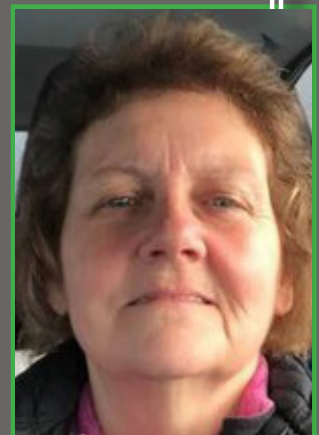
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Maskell named DSP of the Year

Green Mountain Support Services Julie Maskell has been selected as the recipient of ANCOR's 2023 DSP of the Year award for Vermont! Julie was selected for recognition from among more than 300 nominations, and this award serves as a testament to her work to support individuals in the community. Julie is a dedicated, compassionate, and reliable person who provides wonderful care for those she supports. Julie has gone above and beyond for the individuals she supports. In the past year Julie has not only supported one individual but many. Julie offered her support to individuals experiencing crisis and in need of steady, reliable support. Julie's support to individuals is calm and patient. She helps the individuals she supports feel safe and well cared for. Julie builds safe, strong, and reliable relationships with those she supports. Her dedication, consistency, person centered care, and attention to detail is admirable..



MASKELL

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Agency finances under scrutiny

It has been another momentous month for GMSS. The comprehensive work plan with DAIL and CCS was approved, and we are already hard at work on it – examining organizational structure and operations, reviewing policies and practices, developing new protocols to ensure proper budget oversight, etc. We are leaving no stone unturned as we seek to build a strong, secure future for the agency.

As a result of this progress, DAIL Commissioner Monica White has ‘soft’ lifted the moratorium on intakes. We are now able to intake up to two new participants per month provided we demonstrate continued progress toward identified measures. Toward our commitment to transparency, and our belief that a stronger agency is one in which all team members understand what our objectives are, I want to share with all of you the identified measures on which we are reporting, and the success we reported mid-April with each.

COMPLIANCE WITH SHARED LIVING HOME INSPECTION REGULATIONS

Developmental Services Program – 61 Homes [95% compliance, 3 homes out of compliance]

Brain Injury Program – 7 Homes [100% compliance]

Adult Family Care Program – 45 Homes [100% compliance]

MONTHLY IN-HOME VISITS BY SERVICE COORDINATOR

Across all programs, 96% (112 of 117) of our residential participants have service coordination/visit notes completed for the month of March. 78% (91 participants) were visited in their homes, and 18% (21 participants) were visited at an alternate location or virtually.

* The standard and clearly communicated expectation is ‘in the home, every month’ but visits are sometimes performed virtually or at alternate locations, and in some rare circumstances unable to happen at all, for reasons including illness, hospitalization, travel or other exigent circumstances.

COMPLIANCE WITH CMS REGULATIONS FOR CIR REPORTING

93% (14 of 15) of the CIRs submitted to DAIL in March were submitted on time and without error.

MONITORING OF RESPIRITE PROVIDERS

Our monthly service coordination note requires service coordinators to ask about respite services and includes questions such as those below. A random sample of five notes confirmed that service coordinators were attending to these questions with proper diligence.

- Have any new respite providers been hired?
- Have they received pre-service training?
- Have they received person-specific training?
- Have they received special care procedure training from a nurse, if applicable?
- Has a Mandatory Disclosure form been signed and collected?

ADULT FAMILY CARE AND BRAIN INJURY PARTICIPANT REASSESSMENTS

AFC – 3 ILAs were due in March and all 3 were submitted within the required time frame.

BIP – 0 reassessments were due in March.

All AFC and BIP program participants have current assessments in place.

Now, of very significant concern is the state of the agency’s finances. Over the course of the past seven weeks, we have rigorously examined the entire budget and discovered a number of very serious issues. The bottom line is that our spending has been exceeding our income for some time. Causes include decreased revenue



ELIZABETH WALTERS
ACTING INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

due to both client loss and the moratorium on intakes; the maintenance of all service coordinator positions despite us having lost a dozen clients; the purchase of the Wolcott property; the crisis situations that we managed at the Wolcott property; and an uncovered pattern of poor purchasing and spending decisions. The budget situation has demanded a very significant amount of care and attention and will continue to do so for the next several months as we close out the fiscal year at the end of June.

The Board has authorized the movement of funds from investments into a secure, interest-bearing account to protect our principal assets and to provide an operating cushion. Payroll is protected, we want to be clear, but we cannot continue to spend down our savings indefinitely. We have been reviewing the budget line by line identifying any areas where we can save. The low hanging fruit was grabbed first and included things like advertising, subscriptions, memberships, and negotiable contracts with vendors. We are closing the office in Waterbury and have made the Saint Johnsbury office open by appointment only, resulting, regrettably but necessarily, in the elimination of two half-time positions.

The hard truth is that additional cost savings will be necessary. We are working now, with ARIS and with our support team at CCS, to evaluate our options and determine how best to accomplish that. We will be continuing to look at all expenses – facilities, contracts, benefits, and staffing. Our lens will be, and must be, focused on protecting the agency’s core functions so that we can protect those we serve and keep the doors open. These are stressful, difficult times but with continued diligence and dedication, we will get through this, and GMSS will emerge stronger and better. We will continue to communicate updates as quickly as possible. Participants, family members/guardians, and shared living providers who are not already receiving email updates are encouraged to provide Andrea Mayo (andream@gmssi.org) with their email address. Meanwhile, please reach out to me any time with questions or concerns at elizabethw@gmssi.org or (888) 7602 x243.

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Vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant

What is vitamin C? Is it worth the hype? Does it really fight colds as much as we like to think it does?

Vitamin C is also called ascorbic acid. It is a powerful antioxidant that can help fight off harmful free radicals that can damage your cell's DNA and other structures in your body. Vitamin C can be found in citrus fruits like oranges or grapefruit. It can also be found in cabbage, broccoli, even peppers and tomatoes.

Free radicals are essentially a byproduct of breathing. Our cells use oxygen to help break sugars down into usable energy. Most of the oxygen is converted to water, but about 5% becomes molecules with an unbalanced number of electrons. These molecules will start to disrupt their neighbors by stealing electrons in an attempt to balance their electron pairing. What vitamin C, and other antioxidants, will do is donate an electron to the radical to stabilize the molecule.

Vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin that is absorbed down in the bottom of the small intestine. The fact that it is water-soluble means that it is hard to take too much. Fat-soluble vitamins are stored in the liver and fat deposits around the body and have the potential to reach toxic levels if taken too frequently or at the wrong dose. If there is an excess of a water-soluble vitamin, it remains in the blood until it is filtered out by the kidneys and excreted in the urine.

Vitamin C activates an enzyme



MEDICAL CORNER

that is important in producing collagen. It is one of the most abundant and important proteins in your body. You find collagen in tendons, ligaments, cartilage, skin, blood, vessels and even in bones. Without vitamin C the collagen in the body can become weak and ineffective.

This can result in easy bruising, poor bone health, weak ligaments and tendons, and tooth loss. You basically become a pirate with scurvy. Early sailors would routinely line up to receive a spoon full of lemon juice to combat these issues.

So, does Vitamin C reduce your risk of getting a cold, or having less severe cold symptoms? All studies say, not really. Looks like we're just going to have to keep washing our hands.

Walk & Roll
-FOR-
BRAIN INJURY

Hosted By



ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE!

Join BIAVT for the
21st Annual
Walk and Roll
For Brain Injury

- WHEN: Saturday May 6th, 2023
- WHERE: Veterans Memorial Park
South Burlington VT
- TIME: 10 am - 2pm

To Register
Call 802-244-6850
or visit

<https://give.classy.org/biavtwalk2023>



GREEN MOUNTAIN SUPPORT SERVICES



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SUPPORT
NETWORK**

For Shared Living
Providers
(802) 741-7016

For Direct Support
Professionals
(802) 749-2630

We're Available 24 Hours a Day & 7 Days a Week

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ENSURING OUR NEIGHBORS WITH DISABILITIES ARE AT HOME IN THEIR COMMUNITY

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