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**Vermont Agencies File Suit Against Opioid Manufacturers, Distributors**

**Middlebury, VT** – Three Vermont community mental health agencies announced today that they are joining forces in a suit against the opioid drug industry. The three state-designated non-profit agencies include the Counseling Service of Addison County, Inc. (CSAC) in Middlebury, Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS) in southeastern Vermont, and Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS) in northeastern Vermont. Each of these community mental health agencies have incurred significant losses due to the impact of the opioid crisis. Not only have these agencies seen an increase in unreimbursed addiction costs, but they've also experienced increased pressures from providing these critical services.

Rachel Lee Cummings, Executive Director of CSAC, states, "Like all counties in Vermont, Addison County is struggling under the weight of the opioid epidemic. Our county is overwhelmed with opioids, and we have seen an increase in people who need treatment. As a result, we are challenged to support clients and families because of the large financial losses in our substance use and other programs. We believe it is time to hold manufacturers, distributors, and retailers who contributed to this epidemic accountable for the cost of treatment and services."

CEO of HCRS, George Karabakakis, Ph.D., concurs. "The opioid crisis has devastated our communities. In over 50 years of providing services, we have not seen the likes of this crisis before, which is impacting not only the individuals who become addicted to these powerful drugs, but entire families. The manufacturers and distributors of opioids have misled health care professionals and the public regarding the addictive nature of these drugs. We feel it's time for these companies to be held accountable."

*People Helping People*



Member agency - United Way of Addison County

Tomasz Jankowski, CEO of NHKS also adds, “NKHS is recognizing the opioid epidemic that has surrounded us for a long, long time. This epidemic is not subsiding. We want to ensure that we hold the manufacturers and the distributors accountable for the decisions that they have made that have led to the outburst of this epidemic.”

### **About CSAC**

The Counseling Service of Addison County (CSAC) is a non-profit community mental health center located in Middlebury, Vermont. Since 1959 CSAC has been an integral part of the Addison County community. In addition to professional substance use treatment, CSAC offers mental health and developmental services designed to meet the needs of county residents regardless of their ability to pay. CSAC services over 2,300 people each year, and has 24/7 emergency services. CSAC can be reached at (802) 388-6751. Visit [www.csac-vt.org](http://www.csac-vt.org) for more information.

### **About HCRS**

Founded in 1967, Health Care and Rehabilitation Services is a non-profit, community mental health agency serving Vermonters in Windham and Windsor counties. HCRS serves over 4,000 individuals every year through its mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities programs. HCRS provides holistic care for clients, supporting them with employment, housing, transportation, and other social service needs. Visit [www.hcrs.org](http://www.hcrs.org) for more information.

### **About NKHS**

Founded in 1960, Northeast Kingdom Human Services is a non-profit, community mental health agency serving Vermonters in Essex, Caledonia and Orleans counties, with headquarters in Derby and in St. Johnsbury. Spanning a service area of 2025 miles, NKHS serves almost 4,000 individuals every year with programs and support services in mental health, substance use, children, youth and families as well as in intellectual and developmental disabilities services. NKHS is here to enrich communities and enhance the ability of individuals and families to improve their lives. For more information visit [www.nkhs.org](http://www.nkhs.org) or call them 24/7 at (802) 334-6744 for Derby or (802) 748-3181 for St. Johnsbury.

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