

The Vermont RAYS

Raise Awareness for Youth Services

Mission: The Vermont RAYS is a diverse group of young leaders committed to elevating and empowering youth voice across health care and community settings in order to improve the quality, safety, and effectiveness of youth services.

We meet once a month where we are trained by qualified guest speakers on topics related to health advocacy, and have the open space to discuss project activities as a team. Initial project activities include serving as an advisory council to the Youth Health Improvement Initiative at the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program. The Vermont RAYS will offer youth perspectives on issues that affect adolescent and young adult health care. The council will be youth driven, with decisions made by the council and supported by council facilitators.

Our primary project is to collaborate with the Youth Health Improvement Initiative at Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP) as they plan and provide advice to Vermont health care practices that are trying to improve care for adolescents and young adults.

Future council work may include:

- Performing clinic assessments and site visits to primary care practices
- Providing feedback on health care systems and how to best communicate with youth
- Creating videos about topics that are important to adolescents and young adults to share with schools, health centers, or others
- Developing educational materials for adolescents and young adults
- Work with other public health organizations on health promotion campaigns

The VT RAYS seeks to enable meaningful adolescent and young adult involvement in improving adolescent health care in Vermont. Financial incentives will be provided to council members for their participation.

Members

Our council is inclusive and welcomes the diverse experiences and personalities of all. We are always open to new members joining us and look for some of these qualities in our members:

- Non-judgmental
- Dedicated
- Respectful
- Loyal
- Team player
- Committed
- Motivated
- Honest
- Creative
- Community awareness

Roles and Responsibilities



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Understanding expectations helps everyone become an active part of the group. Some of your roles and responsibilities may include:

- Attending and participating in meetings
- Leading decision making in regards to project content and implementation
- Actively voicing opinions
- Helping recruit new members
- Facilitating conversations among youth

Leadership

This council is youth-driven and youth-led, under the guidance of our facilitators. The facilitators will be available at every meeting and will serve the following functions:

- Build community
- Facilitate meetings and help plan meetings
- Provide meeting space and materials
- Arrange offsite activities
- Manage budget and assist with reimbursement
- Communicate meeting times and locations
- Send out reminders
- Conduct topical, educational lessons based on topics being covered
- Provide guidance and help overcome barriers

Building Community

Determining our common ground is an important part of providing a safe and welcoming community. During our orientation, we will work together to establish group agreements to ensure that the Vermont RAYS council is a safe space.

Communications

If you need to connect with the project team, or would like more information, contact Alyssa Consigli at the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program: Alyssa.Consigli@med.uvm.edu

VCHIP would like to thank the University of Michigan Health System's Adolescent Health Initiative (AHI) for sharing their guidebook on best practices for developing and maintaining a Youth Advisory Council. With this guidebook in mind, this summary binder was created.