

The Direct Practice Commission

**National Association of Social Work – Vermont Chapter (NASW-VT)
The Vermont Psychological Association (VPA)
and Vermont Mental Health Counselors Association (VTMHCA)**

Direct Practice Commission

**A Partnership for Assured Access to Integrated Health,
Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Services**

What is the Direct Practice Commission?

The Direct Practice Commission (DPC) was approved by the State of Vermont, Department of Financial Regulation as a bargaining group in September 2013. The DPC represents many of the frontline and independent "direct practitioners" of mental health and substance abuse services in Vermont. This includes licensed psychologists, social workers, clinical mental health counselors, and alcohol and drug counselors who provide substantial outpatient mental health services for Vermonters. As a bargaining group, the DPC can legally negotiate reimbursement rates and strategies with state government entities.

What is the goal of the Direct Practice Commission?

The goal of the DPC is to preserve and enhance access to integrated health care services by:

1. Negotiating reimbursement rates and influencing payment reform models with the State of Vermont as a public payer of health care services.
2. Providing leadership in collaboration and engagement between independently practicing mental health and substance abuse providers and evolving health care payment reform efforts by encouraging integrated and coordinated models of delivering whole-person health care services.
3. Reducing the cost of overall healthcare, improving patient experience, quality of care, and health outcomes.

What can the Direct Practice Commission do?

The DPC, as a provider bargaining group, can:

1. Advocate for fair payment to providers of mental health treatment for all Vermonters without violating anti-trust law.
2. Advocate for adequate access to high quality mental health and substance abuse services.
3. Provide clarity and direction for the necessity that ALL healthcare providers are represented in the delivery of healthcare, from the "unified healthcare budget" negotiations to the actual efficient and ethical frontline delivery of mental health services to Vermonters.