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Memo regarding Respite Care Services:

Bill Ashe, Executive Director Upper Valley Services

The current outbreak of the COVID 19 virus is putting stress on all of us across Vermont and the Country. I want to assure you, it is not lost on me the additional pressure and challenges this presents for you, our providers. I am grateful for your commitment and hard work during this uncertain time.

As you are aware, we have suspended all community and employment supports effective Friday March 20th. Our intention at UVS is to minimize, as best we can, potentially harmful exposures that could adversely affect you and your families.

My team and I are meeting every morning via teleconference, in order to remain apprised of unfolding events and make the most informed and safe decisions for you, our consumers and our staff.

As we continue to assess risk, we are now considering how respite supports should be utilized. Clearly, as the definition of respite indicates, “a break for the caregiver” is now and will be, needed more than ever. However, we are concerned that introducing another person into your home presents a risk for all those involved. At this point, we are asking that all respite be used in a thoughtful and limited manner. We would also ask that the full team (including the consumer, home provider, case manager, and guardian, if applicable) work together to discuss the benefits/risks that utilizing respite services involves and establish consensus on how best to move forward. This decision, like most that are occurring in relation to COVID 19, may need to be amended in the coming days.

For now, I thank you for your ongoing understanding and cooperation.