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United Way of Chittenden County and Vermont Department of Health Continue Community Conversation about Opiate Addiction

November 7, 2014 (South Burlington, VT) - Following the Governor's June 16th Forum on Opiate Addiction at the State House, the Burlington District Office of the Vermont Department of Health and United Way of Chittenden County have partnered with multiple stakeholders to organize follow-up Community Conversations about solutions for opiate addiction in Chittenden County. The first follow-up meeting on August 5th, was attended by over 100 people from across the community and identified several topics for further education and dialogue.

The upcoming Community Conversation is open to the public and will be held on November 17th from 4-6pm at the Black Box Theater at Main Street Landing (60 Lake Street in Burlington). This meeting will continue community-wide dialogue about the issue and convene partnerships to begin building a coordinated strategy to address heroin and opiate addiction in Chittenden County.

The event, sponsored by Main Street Landing, will focus on the treatment system of care and will feature a panel discussion about our current system and how we respond to opiate addiction. Panelists will include William Keithcart, Psychiatric Substance Abuse Counselor at Fletcher Allen Dayone; Dana Poverman, Director of Outpatient and Medication Assisted Treatment Programs at HowardCenter; and Kim Bushey, Program Services Director at the Department of Corrections. Ryan Mitofsky, Prevention Consultant with the Health Department will be the moderator. The panel will discuss questions about topics such as residential and outpatient treatment, Department of Corrections, and the role of medications in treatment.

"Our last Community Conversation was a huge success – so many of our neighbors join the discussion to help identify solutions and learn how we can work together to tackle this problem. With increased public awareness has come a surge of willful energy from citizens and organizations throughout the state to get involved. We're proud of our community for stepping up to work together on this."

The development of prevention strategies is a key focus for United Way in 2014 as part of their work to advance health and well being in Chittenden County. United Way of Chittenden County encourages those interested to RSVP to susana@unitedwaycc.org to join the conversation.

About United Way of Chittenden County:

United Way of Chittenden County unites our whole community to solve complex problems and harness the power of people to create a stronger Chittenden County. United Way convenes advocates, organizations and institutions to address the community's most pressing issues, focusing on the building blocks of a vibrant community: Education, Income and Health. The problems facing our community are complex; they are issues that no single organization or individual alone can solve – real change is possible when nonprofit, public and private sectors work together. United Way has the networks, partnerships and strategic initiatives to improve the lives of our family, friends and neighbors.

For more information or to get involved, visit www.unitedwaycc.org.

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