

FY 2025 – 2027 PAIMI PRIORITIES

**Adopted by DRVT Board of Directors at 9/11/2024 Annual Meeting
Updated by PAC recommendations at 9/10/2025 Annual Meeting**

Case acceptance is based on these criteria:

- 1. Client meets the federal definition of an individual with a mental illness;**
- 2. The case is within the PAIMI priorities;**
- 3. The case has merit;**
- 4. The client does not have other representation; and**
- 5. There are sufficient staff resources to take on the case.**

Priority 1: Improve access to community services and decrease institutionalization.

Measures of Success:

- A.** DRVT will advocate against the development of costly programs that increase institutionalization, in historically abusive environments that cause iatrogenic harms- for both youth and adults receiving mental health supports.
- B.** DRVT will focus on individuals, both children and adults who are institutionalized in a carceral setting, and investigate whether or not steps have been taken to ensure that individuals are in the least restrictive setting possible.
- C.** Track the amount of involuntary commitments that are occurring and compare to whether or not commitment criteria is actually met throughout the involuntary commitment process. Pursue legal action or grievance when people are unrightfully institutionalized. DRVT is not able to represent individuals in involuntary commitment proceedings.
- D.** DRVT will advocate for access to community services including but not limited to: housing, employment, transportation, accessible and adequate community services, shared decision making, and Advance Directives.

Numerical Targets:

- i. DRVT will work with at least 4 community partners to collaborate on issues impacting Vermonters and their ability to live in the least restrictive setting.
- ii. DRVT will engage in legislative and systemic advocacy and will provide testimony, input or public education on at least 3 unique issues impacting Vermonters with disabilities.
- iii. DRVT will provide investigative, advocacy, and legal services when appropriate, but in a minimum of 12 cases in the spirit of the community integration mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Numerical Targets identified above should be met annually.

Target Population: Target Population: PAIMI eligible persons (state run facilities, designated hospitals, designated agencies, specialized service agencies, emergency rooms, facilities for minors, emergency services, state agencies, and policy makers.

Priority 2: Monitor conditions of treatment in facilities and work toward creating culturally competent, trauma-informed, violence free and coercion free mental health treatment environments.

Measures of Success:

- A. DRVT will encourage mental health facilities to eliminate incidents of restraint and seclusion, through training and advocacy, and tracking of hospital reporting of incidents, and hours of seclusion and restraint. This tracking should include reasoning and justification for why any seclusion and/or restraint was deemed necessary.
- B. DRVT will advocate for timely and transparent quarterly reporting on EIP incidents.
- C. DRVT will investigate emergency room care and mental health holds for children and adults seeking mental health care through emergency departments.
- D. DRVT will advocate to create respectful, trauma-informed, violence free and coercion free treatment environments.

Numerical Targets:

- i. DRVT will work with at least 2 community partners (which could include hospitals).
- ii. DRVT will engage in legislative and systemic advocacy and will provide testimony, input or public education on at least 3 occasions to preserve or enhance the right of Vermonters to be free from coercion in their mental health treatment.
- iii. DRVT will conduct outreach to all prisons, psychiatric facilities and juvenile facilities and will provide investigative and legal advocacy services when appropriate, but in a minimum of 20 cases. At least one of these cases will be a legal case.

Numerical Targets identified above should be met annually.

Target Population: PAIMI eligible persons (state run facilities, designated hospitals, designated agencies, specialized service agencies, emergency rooms, facilities for minors, emergency services, state agencies, and policy makers).

Priority 3: Improve access to justice for all Vermonters with disabilities.

Measure of Success:

- A. DRVT will look into rights surrounding the use of Augmented Intelligence in mental health services settings. DRVT will educate the public that this is occurring within designated agencies in VT and develop a list of rights to inform the public of rights.
- B. DRVT will advocate for individuals to have access to medical records upon request without it being a costly burden on the individual.
- C. DRVT will continue to administer and support the Vermont Communication Support Project.
- D. DRVT will work on issues impacting Vermonters and their ability to access justice, such as victims in criminal cases, individuals with communication barriers, interactions with law enforcement, and appropriate disaster preparedness.

Numerical Targets:

- i. DRVT will work with at least 3 community partners to improve access to justice as listed above.
- ii. DRVT will engage in legislative and systemic advocacy and will provide testimony, input or public education on at least 3 access to justice issues impacting Vermonters with disabilities.
- iii. DRVT will provide investigative and legal advocacy services when appropriate, but in a minimum of 12 cases in the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and creating access for Vermonters with disabilities that is equivalent to the access available to Vermonters without disabilities.

Numerical Targets identified above should be met annually.

Target Population: Target Population: PAIMI eligible persons (state run facilities, designated hospitals, designated agencies, specialized service agencies, emergency rooms, facilities for minors, emergency services, state agencies, and policy makers.

In addition to priorities DRVT does not ignore evolving situations and other cases, or treatment facilities which require attention.

Acronyms:

DRVT is Disability Rights Vermont

PAIMI is Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness