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Burlington, VT – In 2015, more individuals received treatment for opioid substance abuse than all other substances. The Working Recovery Team is a cross-sector team focused on discovering the barriers and best practices for employed individuals in recovery to ultimately provide education and support to employers within Chittenden County.

A workforce development project of the Chittenden County Opioid Alliance, the Burlington-based team is one of nine communities awarded a \$25,000 prize from GE HealthyCities Leadership Academy. The team will be presenting the first six months of progress on their population health project and partnership with GE. **Join us Tuesday, June 6th, 9:00 – 10:30 AM at BLA (formerly Burlington Labs), 199 Main Street, Burlington VT.** The morning will include a presentation from the Working Recovery Team, testimony from an area employer who has successfully pivoted hiring practices and workplace culture to support people in recovery, as well as an employee, who herself is in recovery and experienced some of the barriers we're working to identify.

Comprised of cross-sector partners, the Working Recovery Team focus is twofold: Gather and identify current employment barriers and practices within our community of people in lived recovery. Secondly, synthesizing best practices, success stories, challenges and support services to improve hiring and retention of people in recovery in the workforce in Chittenden County. Ultimately, the Working Recovery Team will outreach to local companies to educate, train and provide resources regarding best employment practices for employees in recovery.

We have a growing substance use disorder epidemic in Chittenden County and it has great implications on our community's wellbeing. We need to address one major implication of this epidemic: Businesses' capability, or lack thereof, to hire and support a workforce of people in lived recovery. As one of our partners, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation said in their latest OpEd: "For far too many in our state, workforce skills do not match the opportunities with employers, and the socioeconomic, legal, and medical challenges many face are so entrenched that we will need broad intervention strategies to bring individuals into the formal economy."

The Working Recovery Team's partners include: United Way of NW Vermont, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, the University of Vermont Medical Center, Turning Point Center of Chittenden County, the Vermont Department of Health, Howard Center, and BLA, Inc. (formerly Burlington Labs).

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About Chittenden County Opioid Alliance: Recognizing a persistent need and our community readiness, in January of 2016, a group of state and community partners proposed to more effectively organize our Chittenden County response to the opioid crisis. The proposal brought together the existing efforts to address the complex causes and effects of opioid addiction under one strategic umbrella structure- the Chittenden County Opioid Alliance (CCOA). The Chittenden County Opioid Alliance is funded by the University of Vermont Medical Center, the Stiller Family Foundation through the United Way of Northwest Vermont, GE HealthyCities and the Delta Dental Plan of VT, while the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, the cooperative regional forum for the development of policies, plans and programs that address regional issues and opportunities in Chittenden County, is the fiscal and administrative agent of the grant funds.

For more information, please contact CCOA & GE Project Intern, Tori Houston at thouston@ccrpcvt.org or (802) 595-2843, or visit ecosproject.com/chittenden-county-opioid-alliance.