

**INTEGRATING FAMILY SERVICES**  
**Newsletter**  
**February 2015**  
**Vol.1 Number 1**

**A Word from the Integrating Family Services Management Team**

Welcome to Integrating Family Services' inaugural e-newsletter. Every two months we will use this forum to communicate important Integrating Family Services (IFS) updates from the Management Team, news from the field, and interesting information related to the IFS effort.



**The IFS Management Team includes (from left to right):**

Susan Bartlett, Special Projects, Agency of Human Services (AHS)  
Carol Maloney, Director of Systems Integration, AHS  
Cheryle Bilodeau, IFS Director, AHS

Cheryle Bilodeau, who started in her new capacity as IFS Director on December 29<sup>th</sup>, worked most recently as Policy Operations and Juvenile Justice Director in the Family Services Division at the Vermont Department for Children and Families. Carol and Susan are pleased to have someone with Cheryle's strong direct service and administrative background on board.

The Management Team reports to the Deputy Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Human Services. Together, we are guiding and leading the IFS development and implementation – in close partnership with leaders and managers representing all six Agency Departments and many community partners.

## **Meet the Other IFS Teams**

The IFS Management Team works closely with four other teams: the Senior Leadership Team, the Implementation Team, and regional governance teams in both Addison and Franklin/Grand Isle regions (“early implementers”).

The Senior Leadership Team is comprised of Deputy Commissioners or Division Directors from the six departments that make up the Agency of Human Services:

- Vermont Department for Children and Families
- Vermont Department of Corrections
- Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
- Vermont Department of Health
- Vermont Department of Health Access
- Vermont Department of Mental Health

The Senior Leadership Team also counts as members a representative of the Field Services Directors and the Principal Assistant to the DCF commissioner.

## **Progress on IFS Projects**

Within the next several weeks, state and local providers as well as other key partners such as UVM and the Agency of Education, will have developed a set of what we are calling foundational documents for use in communicating what IFS is, defining our priorities, and establishing a clear path to move IFS forward. These foundational documents include:

- IFS’ vision statement
- IFS’ mission statement
- IFS’ guiding principles
- IFS’ Theory of Change
- Articulation of the eight elements of the IFS model and related components of each element
- A brief overview
- A five-page narrative overview
- A Power Point introduction to IFS
- A three-year strategic plan (2015-2018)
- An 18-month work plan (January 2015-June 2016) and related work groups

Together these conceptual frameworks and documents lay a solid and enduring foundation from which IFS can expand and grow.



## **Join the new IFS learning community!**

In an effort to create an active learning community within Integrating Family Services, the IFS Management Team is excited to announce the launching of the IFS Learning Community.

*What is a learning community?* A learning community is a group of people who share a passion for something and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better. The IFS learning community has three main objectives: To educate, support and encourage.

*What will the IFS learning community offer?* It will offer interested individuals, including staff of community partners, state personnel and families in current and future IFS regions, a forum for problem-solving, promoting knowledge sharing, creating synergy among regions and fomenting innovation. It is also another way for the IFS Management Team to get your feedback on potential changes in practice, structure, polices and other aspects of IFS that affect communities directly.

*What topics will be discussed?* The topics for the first three sessions will be: 1. Governance – creating a model for shared accountability and collective decision-making; 2. Strengthening Families – embedding this framework into the IFS practice model; and 3. Payment Reform – why payment reform is essential to better meet the needs of children, youth and families.

*Who can participate?* The IFS learning community is open to anyone who is willing to be an active participant.

*How will the IFS learning community be organized?* The IFS learning community will meet virtually (via phone or webinar) once a month for one hour. The coordinator (IFS Management Team) will provide light-handed guidance in the areas of process and logistics. Participants will be asked to sign up for a three-month series to ensure consistency. Each month's session will focus on a different topic.

*When will the first session be held?* The sessions in the first series will be held on **Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday May 26<sup>th</sup>. All will take place from 12-1 p.m.**

*How do I participate in the IFS learning community?* To sign up for the first series, email IFS Business Administrator Carolynn Hatin at [carolynn.hatin@state.vt.us](mailto:carolynn.hatin@state.vt.us).

*Whom do I contact for more information?* Contact Carol Maloney at [carol.maloney@state.vt.us](mailto:carol.maloney@state.vt.us) or (802) 279-6677.

## **IFS and Health Care Reform**

Financing and payment reform are one of the eight elements of the IFS model. Health care reform, including health care financing, is a key component of IFS' work.

In her capacity as co-chair of the IFS Financing and Payment Reform Work Group, Susan Bartlett is leading the charge. Click [here](#) for an article published recently in [vtdigger.org](http://vtdigger.org), which outlines the challenges and opportunities. As stated in the article, "The goals of Vermont's health care reform efforts as stated by the Agency of Administration are to:

1. Reduce health care costs and cost growth;
2. Assure that all Vermonters have access to and coverage for high-quality health care (health care includes mental and physical health and substance abuse treatment);
3. Support improvements in the health of Vermont's population;
4. Assure greater fairness and equity in how we pay for health care."

The article goes on to say that "[T]he state should not delay working with willing providers to develop bundled payment models that reimburse for specific population outcomes. The current fee-for-service payment model from multiple funding streams with varied bureaucratic requirements wastes funding and prevents the flexibility needed to best meet people's needs. *The experience to date with Integrating Family Services in two regions of Vermont has shown improved services, reduced administrative expenses and cost savings* [emphasis added]."

## **For More Information**

To receive this newsletter, or to be removed from the distribution list, please contact Carolynn Hatin, IFS Business Administrator, at [carolynn.hatin@state.vt.us](mailto:carolynn.hatin@state.vt.us).

If you are interested in being more involved in IFS, contact Cheryle Bilodeau, IFS Director, at [Cheryle.bilodeau@state.vt.us](mailto:Cheryle.bilodeau@state.vt.us) or (802) 760-9171.

For general questions about IFS, contact any of the IFS Management Team members:

- Carol Maloney: [carol.maloney@state.vt.us](mailto:carol.maloney@state.vt.us) or (802) 871-3392
- Susan Bartlett: [susan.bartlett@state.vt.us](mailto:susan.bartlett@state.vt.us) or (802) 917-4852
- Cheryle Bilodeau: [cheryle.bilodeau@state.vt.us](mailto:cheryle.bilodeau@state.vt.us) or (802) 760-9171