

PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

June 1, 2021

Vermont General Assembly
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Re: H.225, An act relating to possession of a therapeutic dosage of buprenorphine

Dear Legislators:

Today, I signed H.225, *An act relating to possession of a therapeutic dosage of buprenorphine*, despite concerns on whether there is a need for this legislation given the availability of substance misuse treatment options through our proven hub and spoke system. I am concerned about the lack of data on decriminalizing buprenorphine and its effectiveness in reducing opiate overdoses is unproven. The impact of diverted medication and its use outside of treatment is also a concern, given the critical support the hub and spoke system provides, and with the difficulty prescribers may face in their work to ensure successful treatment.

However, we know addiction is a chronic illness and continue to see the devastating impacts on individuals, their families, and communities. Although I remain skeptical, I signed this bill because it is well-intentioned and offers another potential approach to reduce the impacts of substance use disorder. Most importantly, from my perspective, was the Legislature's decision to include an endpoint for this law, which will sunset on July 1, 2023, providing experts the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of this initiative.

It is important to me that we do not unravel previous progress, increase abuse of diverted drugs, or jeopardize the success of the hub and spoke system.

Attached to this letter please find Executive Order 05-21, directing the chief prevention officer to assemble a task force charged with setting performance metrics and collecting and measuring the data needed to assess the effectiveness of decriminalizing buprenorphine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip B. Scott", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp