



Brattleboro
Retreat

Strength in care.
Bold in growth.

Building on



Steve Cummings, BSN, MBA
Interim Chief Executive Officer,
Brattleboro Retreat

I am honored to introduce myself as the Interim Chief Executive Officer of the Brattleboro Retreat.

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of working closely with our dedicated staff, witnessing firsthand their unwavering commitment to providing compassionate care to some of the most vulnerable individuals in our region.

Under the leadership of my predecessor, Linda Rossi, the Retreat achieved a remarkable position of financial stability and fostered improved relationships with our union partners. I am eager to build on this momentum and plan to invest in new technologies, find new solutions to attract and retain top talent, strengthen connections with healthcare systems across the state, while reinforcing our commitment to our mission of providing clinical excellence.

Having started my career as a registered nurse, I bring a unique perspective to this role—one that is grounded in clinical care, but also shaped by extensive experience in healthcare administration and technology. One of my top priorities is the implementation of a modern electronic

health record (EHR), making our clinicians' jobs easier and improving the overall efficiency of our care delivery.

As the only inpatient mental health services provider for children and adolescents in Vermont, I recognize the critical role we play in the lives of young people and their families. We are dedicated to expanding to meet the unique needs of these patients through specialized care and innovative programs.

The Brattleboro Retreat is a vital resource for our community, and as we continue to evolve, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. Together, we can ensure that we remain a beacon of hope for all who seek our care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Steve Cummings".

Steven P. Cummings
Interim CEO
Brattleboro Retreat

momentum

Named for the founder of the Brattleboro Retreat, the **Anna Marsh Award** was established by the Brattleboro Retreat in 2009 to recognize individuals for their advocacy on behalf of people with mental illness and addiction.

Linda Rossi joined the Brattleboro Retreat in 2018 as the Vice President of Human Resources. In 2021, Linda assumed the role of Executive Vice President, and by April 2022, she made history as the Retreat's first female President and Chief Executive Officer.

Throughout her tenure, Linda exemplified bold leadership with compassion. She steered the Retreat into the future, nurturing its workforce and resources while forging strong partnerships with the State of Vermont and the hospital's union.

During the pandemic's unprecedented challenges, Linda's strategic acumen proved invaluable. She navigated the storm, rebuilding the workforce, programs, and patient census, ensuring the hospital could continue its

mission of providing compassionate care to those in need.

Under her guidance, the Retreat created innovative new treatment programs and refined its role as a leading provider of child and adolescent mental health services. She assembled a transformative leadership team that will ensure the Retreat continues to address the evolving needs of the community.

Linda led with both mind and heart, leaving an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire us for years to come.



Upholding our mission takes extraordinary individual effort and flawless teamwork. I cannot tell you how proud I am that the Retreat is living up to its promises and potential.”

- Linda Rossi

Linda Rossi
Anna Marsh Award
Honoree



Strength

Brattleboro Retreat Executive Team: Stability and Visionary Leadership



Kurt White, Vice President of Community Partnerships, Valerie Ostrander, Vice President of Revenue Cycle, Elizabeth Wohl, General Counsel, Jill Meschke, Chief Financial Officer, Steve Cummings, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Karl Jeffries, Chief Medical Officer, Erik Rosenbauer, Vice President of Operations, Christine Konkowski, Vice President of Human Resources, Amelia Shillingford, Chief Nursing Officer

The leadership group at the Brattleboro Retreat is incredibly dedicated and fully committed to the mission. This team works seamlessly together, bringing a deep sense of passion and dedication to the organization.

Each member of the team shares a personal connection to the enduring mission of the Brattleboro Retreat and guides the direction of the organization to align with its core values.



We have such an amazing and talented Executive Team who are mission driven, passionate about the work, and who have such a diverse set of skills. For me, it's a pleasure to come to work every day; for the Retreat, I truly believe we have all the right people doing the right things."



-Kurt White, Vice President of Community Partnerships



"If you or a loved one look to the Brattleboro Retreat for help, you can have confidence knowing you are in the hands of compassionate, mission-driven professionals who are committed to providing the highest quality care.

- Amelia Shillingford, Chief Nursing Officer



in care

Brattleboro Retreat Medical Staff: Leading the Way in Mental Health Care

The Brattleboro Retreat's medical staff are experts in their fields, embodying the highest standards of care and professionalism. These dedicated professionals are at the leading edge of mental health care, ensuring that the Retreat's patients receive the most innovative and effective treatments available. Every member of the medical staff shares a sense of ownership and pride in their work, recognizing that mental health care is not just a part of what we do—it is our sole focus.



It is a privilege to lead a medical staff rich in professional experience and energized by the young, next generation of healthcare providers. The collaboration among providers with a diversity of personalities and backgrounds is inspiring and pushes us to greater excellence in healthcare.”

- Dr. Jarred Zucker, Medical Staff President



Brattleboro Retreat Medical Staff

Bold in



I deal with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and more recently, burnout, which is why the program for first responders really resonated with me. The more you do, the more you are asked to do. Healthcare workers aren't superhuman."

- Marina Cesar, Healthcare Worker

Healthcare Professionals and First Responders Program

In response to the pandemic-related rise in mental health issues among healthcare providers, the Retreat launched a new Partial Hospitalization and Intensive Outpatient Program (PHP/IOP) specifically for frontline workers. The program offers virtual, specialized treatment in a group therapy format for healthcare workers or first responders who struggle with PTSD, depression, anxiety, or stress that may be connected to the unique work that they do.

Specialty Medication Program

Great advances are being made in medication-based treatment for mental health disorders. The Retreat's Specialty Medication Clinic is now offering esketamine (Spravato®) therapy for people with treatment-resistant depression as an outpatient program. This new treatment works in a different way and often much more quickly than existing medication treatments for depression.

TMS Program

While most mental health treatments involve either a medication or psychotherapy, TMS (transcranial magnetic stimulation) is a completely different way to help people who haven't been helped by other treatments. TMS is a non-invasive method of stimulating the brain with powerful magnetic fields. TMS is believed to modulate brain activity in regions associated with mood regulation and is considered a well-tolerated option for people with treatment-resistant depression.



growth

A Renewed Commitment to Adolescent Residential Treatment

The Brattleboro Retreat is excited to announce renewed capacity for adolescent residential programming. The Retreat has proposed the development of a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) on campus, that will serve youth aged 12 to 18. The Retreat's long-running adolescent residential treatment program paused during the pandemic because staffing, demand and funding all contracted. A renewed focus on the needs of adolescents for services makes this the perfect time to revitalize this program.

This voluntary, staff-secure facility will provide 24-hour therapeutic care in a safe, nurturing environment, adding a crucial element to our continuum of care for children and adolescents, and bridging the gap between outpatient services and inpatient hospitalization.



“By investing in this new program, we are investing in the future of Vermont’s children and adolescents, helping them emerge from their challenges stronger, more resilient, and ready to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.”

-Alix Goldschmidt, Child and Adolescent Residential Services



This intensive residential program will cater to Vermont youth facing severe mental health challenges, unsafe behaviors, and the effects of trauma. Designed for those who have not responded to less intensive treatments, the PRTF will offer comprehensive, around-the-clock care to address their complex needs, helping to keep them close to their families and support systems. By expanding child and adolescent services, the Brattleboro Retreat hopes to address a critical gap in Vermont’s mental health system.



The Brattleboro Retreat is currently the only psychiatric hospital in Vermont with child and adolescent inpatient units, and the addition of this residential facility will provide a much-needed intermediate level of care.”

- Dr. Lance Thigpen,
Medical Dir. of Outpatient
and Residential Services



Strength in



Retreat Clinicians Embedded at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital

Through innovative partnerships and outreach initiatives, the Brattleboro Retreat strives to break down barriers, reduce stigma, and ensure that mental health support is available to all, regardless of circumstance.

Embedded Clinicians at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH)

In 2024, we expanded our partnership with BMH to embed social workers and psychotherapists in primary and specialty care settings. Retreat clinicians now provide mental health screenings, short-term therapy, and referrals within BMH practices, including primary care, Four Seasons OBGYN, and the Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Clinic.

Healthworks ACT Team

Addressing the complex needs of the unhoused and housing-insecure population, the Brattleboro Retreat, Healthcare and Rehabilitation Services, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, and Groundworks Collaborative formed Healthworks ACT LLC in 2023. This partnership delivers a comprehensive array of services, including outreach-based primary care, directly to individuals wherever they are.

SASH For All Pilot Program

SASH For All is a pilot program providing support to affordable housing residents through a partnership with the Retreat, Windham Windsor Housing Trust, and Brattleboro Housing Partnership. Participants are offered a spectrum of support, including mental health services from a Retreat clinician.



The Multidisciplinary Healthworks ACT Team

community

Community and Employee Support Drives The Mission Forward

The Brattleboro Retreat's mission is made possible by the generosity of the **community**, with a significant portion of support coming from its dedicated employees and grateful former patients.

William Rockwell, the Brattleboro Retreat's first and longest serving superintendent, selflessly returned four hundred dollars of his one thousand dollar salary to help keep the hospital going in its first year of operation. In this spirit of generosity, the Rockwell Society recognizes employees who have donated a cumulative amount of ten thousand dollars or more across years.

Grateful Patients Give Back

“When I left the Brattleboro Retreat, I had a 'return to life' plan. In addition to meditating every day and exercising, I committed to acts of gratitude. That is why I donate to the Brattleboro Retreat. I'm grateful for my stay at the Brattleboro Retreat. I was able to reset my life and go home. My children understood that 'Dad needed help' and that I got it at the Brattleboro Retreat. I was worried that I'd lose my job. Instead, I was able to return to work and was even promoted. I'm proud that I was able to model for my children and my co-workers - that **when you need help, it's there.**”

-Anonymous Donor and Patient



Eleven new inductees to the Rockwell Society. Pictured above: Kurt White, Dr. Karl Jeffries, Gerri Cote, Susan Stanclift, Dr. Dorothea DeGutis, and Dr. Jilisa Snyder. Not pictured: Meghan Baston, Dr. Kyle Hagstrom, Dr. Thomas Hoskins, Linda Rossi, and Mary Trombley.

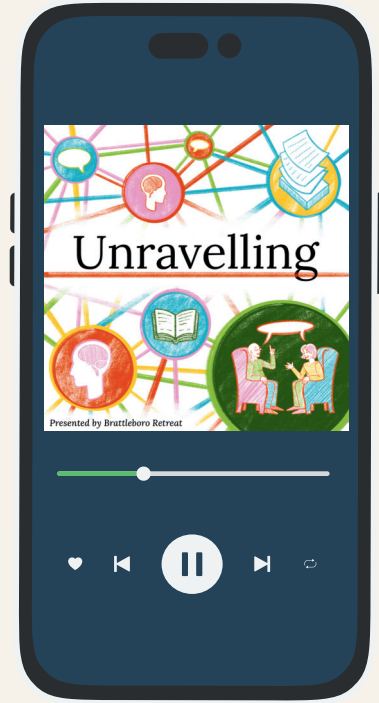


“When employees are committed to care for our community - it shows.”

-Steve Cummings, Interim CEO

Bold in

Mental Health Education and Advocacy



'Unravelling' Podcast

The Brattleboro Retreat launched its latest educational outreach initiative: the Unravelling podcast. Hosted by social worker and psychotherapist Kurt White and journalist Mary Wilson, Unravelling seeks to enrich the conversation on mental health by delving into the often-overlooked complexities, providing a more nuanced perspective than typically found in public discourse.

Each bi-weekly episode of Unravelling explores a complex mental health topic, including mental health needs in the transgender community, navigating loss and grief, and suicide prevention.

Find Unravelling on major podcast platforms or at brattlebororetreat.org/podcast.

Sharing Expertise



Holly Galbraith, Director of Nursing is interviewed by a reporter from WCAX-TV

The Retreat has been featured on local television news several times this year, providing its experts with a platform to advocate for mental health awareness and combat stigma.

These appearances highlighted critical issues, including burnout among healthcare workers, suicide prevention initiatives, and the benefits of virtual intensive outpatient therapy.

Brattleboro Reformer

BRATTLEBORO RETREAT

Harmonious healing: Meet a music therapist

The Brattleboro Reformer, Daniel Long OTR-T, interviews the Brattleboro Retreat's inpatient music therapist, Ayla Clark, MA, PhD.

What is music therapy? Music touches all aspects of physical, emotional, psychological and behavioral. Music therapy is a complementary or alternative therapy that helps develop coping skills, emotional regulation, memory and executive skills, and interpersonal effectiveness. Also, it's used to help patients with dementia, stroke, and autism.

How long have you been a music therapist? Since I graduated from the Conservatory (Brattleboro Technical University) with my master's degree when I was 23 years old.

What techniques do you use, and why? Number one is drumming. Drumming techniques are so important. They help the body fight against neurological and psychological disorders. It brings people



PHOTO PROVIDED BY BRATTLEBORO RETREAT
Dr. Ayla Clark is the Brattleboro Retreat's inpatient music therapist.

together. It's so important for so-called "stressed" in singing, writing and singing songs. They say singing is so beneficial. It's like a massage for the brain. Even singing for

a short duration. That is playing a musical instrument or listening to music. This is helpful for learning and inspiration, memory building, cognitive skills and confidence, too.

What do you enjoy about music? (She smiles) It is healing. I love it. It gives me calm feelings. We all have up and down cycles. When I play an instrument, I feel what's happening to me in five minutes. My students have said other things and I start to feel happy. That's why I feel the music is so important to be involved with music.

Do you think patients can feel music is having a positive impact on you, as well as them? Oh yes. It's like having an electric wire between you and them. Their own energy circulates between us.

I feel it, too. If I have a person being healed by music in my group, I feel better, too. Positive effects come on how healing it is to play music, or to listen to a piece that they say, "Thank you so much. I feel better. I needed that."

That's beautiful! What is your

favorite part of working with people? Helping them. There is a lot to help them. It's a very nice feeling to help someone going through something difficult. Like depression. I can see you are healing.

Then when the next session comes, they're waiting for it. I never push them to come to the group. Wherever they're interested in. It's so important to me that they want to do it.

Not for me or someone else, but for them.

Yes, that's right. Does anything surprise you about the work? Sometimes when people listen to music, they start to cry. It's not really a surprise. I support them in what they're doing. Sharing their feelings. I listen to them with their feelings for a few minutes.

People apologize and ask if it's OK. Like, "Obviously it's like laughing. Thank you for sharing your feelings." Emotional expression can make people a little uncomfortable, and I use non-verbal language, presence and other skills to encourage

them in a supported process. Can you tell me about the instrument you play? In elementary school I started playing them. I wanted to learn an instrument. I was very attracted to the harmonium. I started playing harmonium in Eastern Europe and the Middle East with variations in Japan and China. It's a very classical instrument. Beautiful and beautiful in the same time. Like Greek, Turkish or Irish music.

Do you have a nickname for your instrument? (Laughs heartily) Not really. Maybe I do.

Thank you for what you bring to our readers. What's really a surprise? I support them in what they're doing. Sharing their feelings. I listen to them with their feelings for a few minutes.

Ayla Clark, MA, PhD, is a music therapist at the Brattleboro Retreat. She has a master's in music therapy and PhD in music therapy with honors from the Brattleboro Technical University of Vermont. She is a member of the American Music Therapy Association and has a master's in occupational therapy and is also a member of the American Music Therapy Association.

Staff Columns

Retreat staff members contribute monthly columns to the Brattleboro Reformer, Manchester Journal, and Bennington Banner, sharing their insight and expertise on a variety of mental health topics with readers across Vermont.

advocacy

A Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

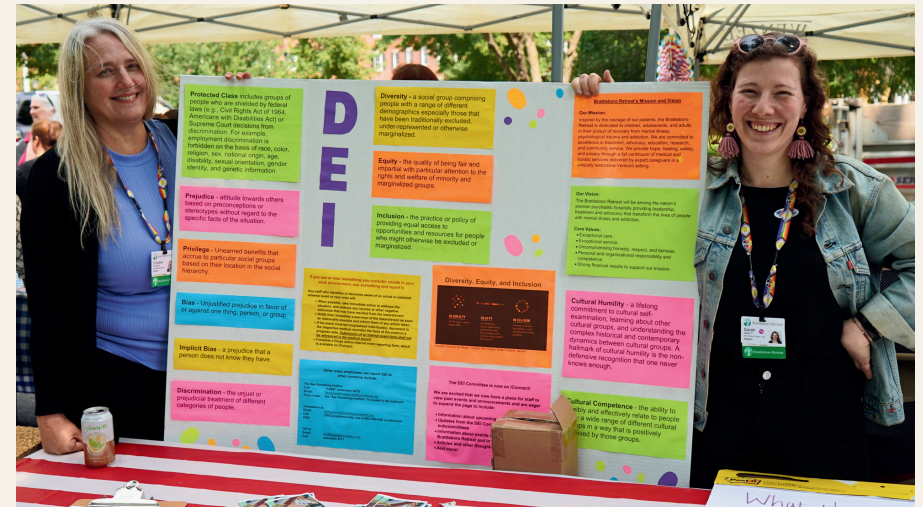
The Board of Trustees at the Brattleboro Retreat is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by establishing a dedicated DEI Committee and implementing educational initiatives that address bias, discrimination, and disparities in healthcare access for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and other marginalized communities.

The DEI Committee approved an institution-wide work plan, which lays out specific DEI goals, including state and community collaborations, updated implicit bias training for staff, special events, like an annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day lecture, and participation in the CDC/VDH Health Equity Initiative. The Retreat is dedicated to breaking down barriers and eliminating disparities in mental healthcare.

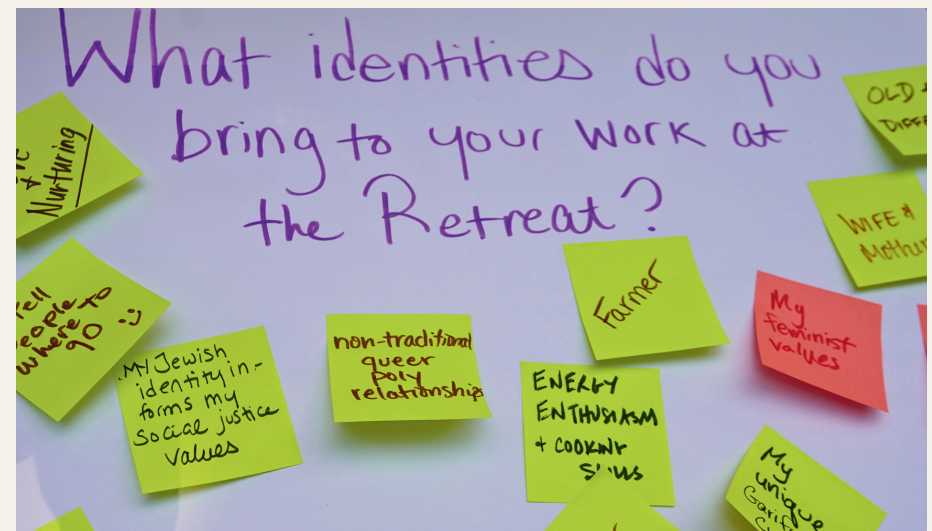


At the Retreat, we are amplifying our commitment to creating an inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive environment for both staff and patients. We've been encouraged by feedback from staff who have taken the new implicit bias training and say it will impact their work moving forward."

-Sarah Turbow, Anna Marsh Clinic Therapist,
Interim Chair of the Retreat DEI Committee



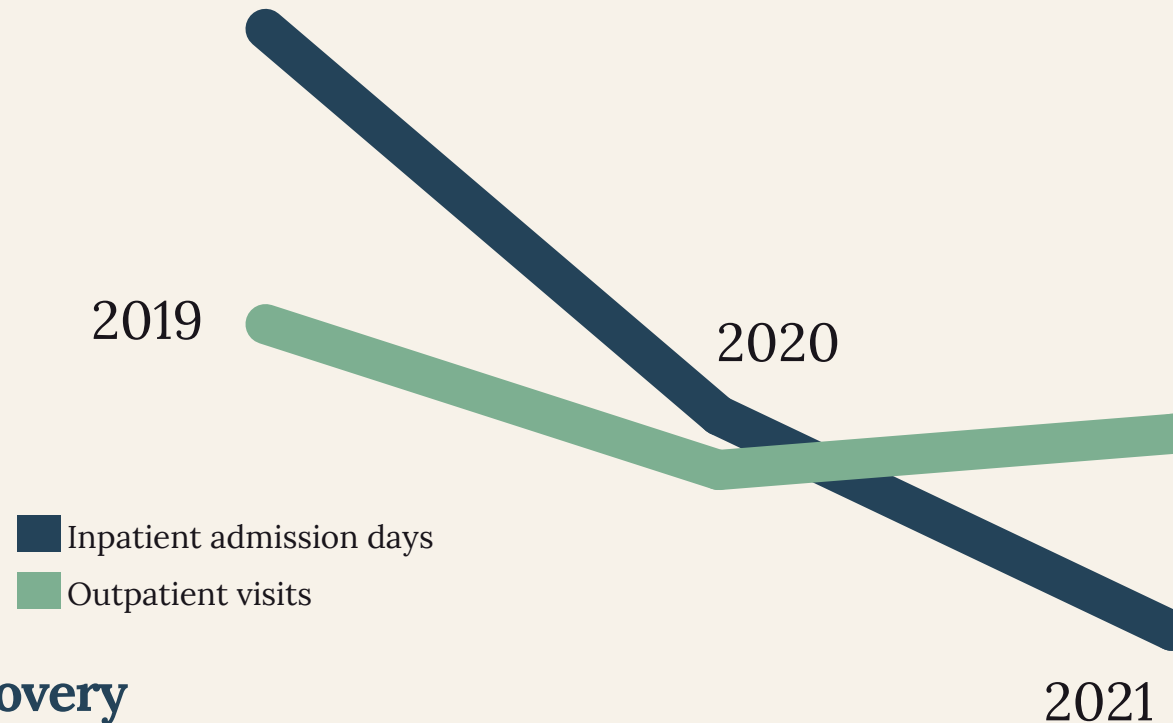
Christine Konkowski, Vice President of Human Resources and Sarah Turbow, Anna Marsh Clinic Therapist at the Retreat Employee Appreciation Picnic



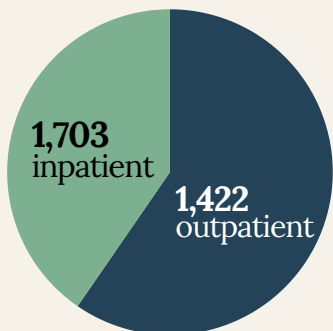
Strength in

2023 Patient Care

Inpatient days	33,235
Inpatient admissions	1,778
Adult inpatient admissions	1,239
Child/adolescent inpatient admissions	539
Outpatient visits	31,777
Residential days	2,777



Total number of people served

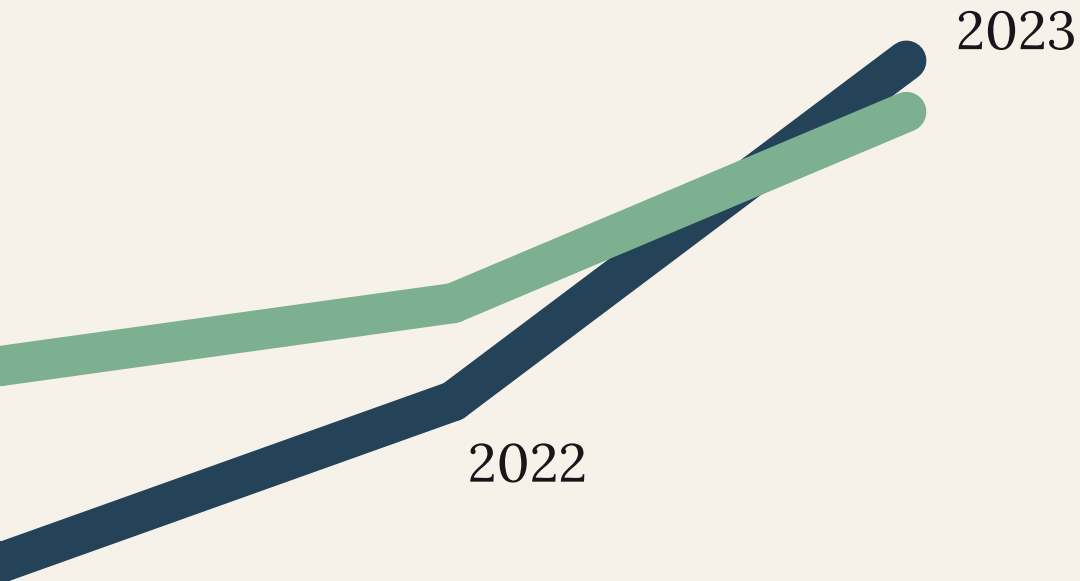


Resilience and Recovery

The Brattleboro Retreat's resurgence following the pandemic is nothing short of remarkable. During the height of the crisis, the number of patients the Retreat served daily plummeted to about 45, down from our historical average of over 100. This was largely due to state border restrictions and an unprecedented staffing shortage that hit the healthcare industry hard. It left many in need of care and overwhelmed emergency rooms ill-equipped for such specialized treatment.

In response, the Retreat's dedicated staff and board undertook an extensive effort to rebuild and expand services. Today, we are once again serving 100 patients daily, finding innovative solutions to address staffing challenges and expanding outpatient services, solidifying the role of the Brattleboro Retreat as a critical resource in the Region's mental health landscape.

resurgence

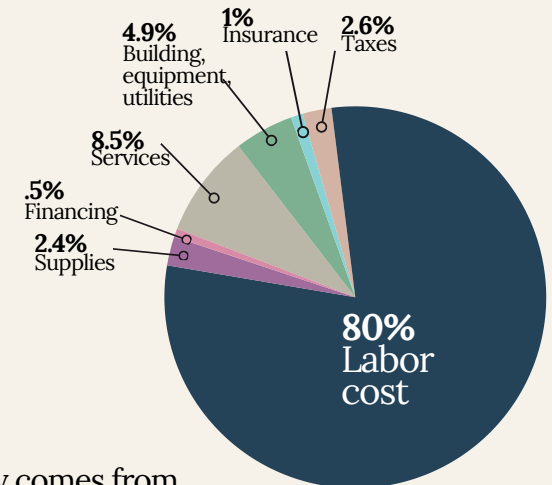


As a board member, this broke my heart, to know there were so many patients that needed our help, and many patients were waiting for very long times in hospital emergency rooms. And as a former hospital administrator, I knew it would take a herculean effort to rebuild. How can you rebuild your staff and your programs in a time of staffing shortages? I almost can't believe it myself, to announce to you today, that we have found a way and are caring for 100 inpatients per day again!"

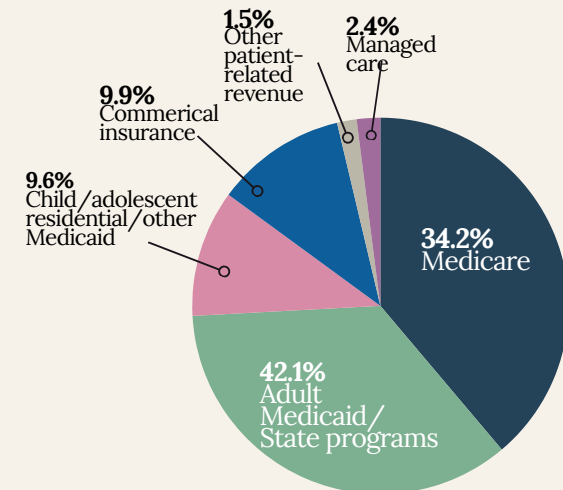
- Tom Huebner, Board Chair

2023 Financials

Where the money goes



Where the money comes from



Bold vision

The Retreat's Board of Trustees approved a visionary strategic plan that will guide the organization's direction and priorities from 2023 to 2025.

The Retreat strives to be the best it can be to all whom it serves in all aspects of its operations. This belief has led to a new vision based on three key principles that are crucial for the Retreat's future success: be the best provider, best employer, and best business it can be.

Best Provider

By focusing on clinical excellence, innovation, and patient-centered care, the Retreat aims to be the best provider, ensuring that every patient receives the right care at the right time.

Best Employer

The Retreat is committed to being the best employer by creating a work environment that is enjoyable, meaningful, and inclusive, with a strong emphasis on employee well-being and development.

Best Business

The Retreat strives to be the best business by optimizing revenue, fostering productive partnerships, and ensuring all transactions are accurate and transparent, all while maintaining a positive reputation.



Our commitment is clear: we strive to be the very best in every aspect of what we do. It's a focused approach to build a healthier community, a happier workforce, and a stronger Retreat for the future."

- Dr. Karl Jeffries, Chief Medical Officer



for the future

Brattleboro Retreat Board of Trustees

The Brattleboro Retreat is a private, not-for-profit organization governed by a volunteer board of trustees.



Tom Huebner, Board Chair

“Through the pandemic and the rebuilding that followed, our mission to heal and improve lives has guided us. We've faced tough days, but our future is bright, and our work will always be needed. I truly appreciate the commitment each staff member brings to our mission!”

Justin Johnson, Vice Chair

“I have always believed that the Retreat's greatest strength is its clinical excellence. We operate in a tough environment, sometimes at the mercy of outside forces, but excellence in patient care - that is all us.”



Elizabeth Catlin, Board Member

“The Retreat is an innovator at the center of Vermont's behavioral health system, constantly adapting to meet the needs of Vermonters. The breakthrough clinical opportunities in our outpatient Specialty Medication Clinic give me great hope that patients can get relief from treatment-resistant depression and PTSD.”



Not pictured: **Drew Pate, MD, Christopher Turley, Joe Pyle, MA, Julie Potter, Wichie Artu, Kristan Outwater, MD, Julie Vieth, MD**

Your support matters

The Brattleboro Retreat was founded on the ideal of 'moral treatment' nearly two centuries ago. We've always led the nation in the most advanced mental health treatments that respect the individuality of our patients. And as a non-profit, we carry this torch of hope with your help.

Make hope for healing possible for someone today, donate to the Brattleboro Retreat.



The Brattleboro Retreat is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Contact us

Rob Szpila

Development Officer

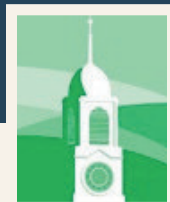
development@brattlebororetreat.org

802-258-4366



Mission of the Brattleboro Retreat

Inspired by the courage of our patients, the Brattleboro Retreat is dedicated to children, adolescents, and adults in their pursuit of recovery from mental illness, psychological trauma, and addiction. We are committed to excellence in treatment, advocacy, education, research, and community service. We provide hope, healing, safety, and privacy through a full continuum of medical and holistic services delivered by expert caregivers in a uniquely restorative Vermont setting.



brattlebororetreat.org

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