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## **UCS Director Ralph Provenza Elected to National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare**

Bennington and Manchester, Vt. — United Counseling Service (UCS) Executive Director Ralph Provenza has been elected to the board of directors of the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, a leading national association that advocates for better behavioral healthcare.

“Ralph Provenza has worked with UCS for more than 20 years,” said UCS Board President Gerrit Kouwenhoven, “and this appointment reflects his experience, leadership, and administrative ability. He joins a very select group of behavioral healthcare executives who are committed to the recovery and full social inclusion of persons with mental illnesses and addiction disorders and to using the current healthcare reform debate to further those goals.”

UCS Executive Director since 2003, Provenza has been a leader in the state and worked closely with the governor and legislature to strengthen the behavioral health care system for Vermonters.

Provenza is President of the Vermont Council of Developmental and Mental Health Services, the state association advocating for better mental health and developmental disability services. He is also Board Secretary of the Behavioral Health Network, which provides statewide leadership in Vermont to support a consistently high quality behavioral health network.

“I am honored to have been elected to the National Council’s board at a critical time in the history of our nation’s healthcare system,” said Provenza. “I look forward to the opportunity to advocate at the federal level and work to improve the quality of life for adults, children and families struggling with mental illnesses and addiction disorders.”

“To put that in context,” Provenza said, “persons with serious mental illnesses have the highest mortality rate of any population anywhere in America’s public health system. In addition, the challenges are even greater for those struggling with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues. So clearly we have work to do, in Bennington and nationally.”

“We are fortunate to have the leadership of Ralph Provenza,” said Linda Rosenberg, National Council President and CEO. “The strength of the board cannot be overstated; each member brings to the table an understanding of community and a vision of National Council member organizations as essential community problem solvers.”

UCS serves children, adults, families, and seniors through nationally recognized counseling, early care and education, and clinical support. Visit [www.ucsvt.org](http://www.ucsvt.org) to find out more.

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