

Joint Subcommittee to Study Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century

Work Group # 1: Service System Structure and Financing

Meeting #4 Summary

Friday, September 30, 2016
3rd Floor East Conference Room
General Assembly Building, Richmond, Virginia

Work Group #1: Service System Structure and Financing (the Work Group) of the Joint Subcommittee to Study Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century (the Joint Subcommittee) held a joint meeting with the Service System Structure and Financing Advisory Panel (the Panel) on Friday, September 30, 2016, at the Capitol Building in Richmond. Members present included Senator Hanger (Chair), Senator Deeds, and Delegate Farrell. Materials from the meeting can be found on the Joint Subcommittee's website at http://dls.virginia.gov/interim_studies_MHS.html.

Update on Activities of the Panel

Dr. Richard Bonnie reported that the Panel had been working on a number of issues related to goals and responsibilities of the public mental health service system: oversight, accountability, leadership, and coordination of the public mental health service system; mandated services for community services boards (CSBs); state hospital utilization rates; and options for financing changes to the mental health service system.

Preliminary Report and Recommendations on Core Services

Staff presented a preliminary report that described the 10 services included in the STEP-VA model of public behavioral health services developed by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). The report also set out estimates of funding required to implement each of the 10 services described and identified two priorities for implementation: same day access to services and outpatient primary care screening, monitoring, and referral. Following discussion of why these two priorities had been identified, the Work Group voted to adopt the plan as described in the preliminary report and to move forward with the priorities identified.

Update from DBHDS

Dr. Jack Barber, Interim Commissioner of DBHDS, spoke with the Work Group regarding how the estimates of costs for implementation of the 10 services identified in the preliminary report were determined and spoke about how the priorities were identified. Delegate Farrell inquired as to whether DBHDS was concerned about overloading the existing service system by implementing same day access without investing in development of additional services. Dr. Barber described the benefits to individuals receiving services from CSBs of implementing same day access, including improving connection to services and improving follow-through with services, as well as introducing greater efficiency in business practices and reducing no-shows for appointments.

Senator Hanger mentioned the impact of recent legislative changes on state hospital bed utilization. He specifically mentioned the need to examine the Commonwealth's relationship with private facilities and to develop better partnerships to address the need for beds. Dr. Barber addressed the need to make sure beds are available for those in need, noting that private facilities tend to accept many individuals involved in the temporary detention and involuntary commitment process but that the need for state hospital beds has increased. He stated that both the needs of individuals entering the system and those of individuals who are ready for discharge need to be addressed.

State Hospital Utilization Rates

Jim Martinez, a member of the Panel, described the Panel's research into options for addressing state hospital bed utilization. A copy of the report can be found on the Joint Subcommittee's website at <http://dls.virginia.gov/groups/mhs/bed%20utilization.pdf>. Panel members stated that additional research into the issue was required and that recommendations would be forthcoming at a later meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Work Group will be held on October 26, 2016, at 10:00 a.m.