

**Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services
in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century
Work Group #1 (System Structure and Financing)
Meeting Summary
May 7, 2018
Eastern State Hospital, Williamsburg, Virginia**

Work Group #1 (System Structure and Financing) (the Work Group) of the Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century (the Joint Subcommittee) held its first meeting of the 2018 interim on Monday, May 7, 2018, at Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Virginia. Following introductions, Senator Hanger, the Work Group's chair, noted that the Work Group and the Joint Subcommittee have two years remaining to complete their work. Over the course of the remaining two years, the Work Group will focus on developing and implementing the STEP-VA plan for services and addressing the significant demands placed on state hospitals. At the same time, the Work Group needs to make decisions regarding the structure and organization of the Commonwealth's publicly funded mental health service system. This includes evaluating the role and function of community services boards and differences in local funding for mental health services. Senator Hanger also noted that Medicaid expansion, if included in the Commonwealth's budget, could offer an opportunity for significant changes to the publicly funded mental health service system.

Discussion of Work Group Organization, Goals, and Work Plan

Following introductions and opening remarks, the Work Group members discussed the Work Group's organization, goals, and work plan for the interim. To begin, staff presented the draft work plan, which calls for the Work Group to focus on the structure of the publicly funded mental health service system during the 2018 interim. Major topics set out in the draft work plan include:

- Review of the current publicly funded mental health service system, including the major components of the system, the role of and relationships among those components, the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, and recently implemented initiatives focused at reforming the system;
- Identification and evaluation of other service delivery models, including service delivery systems in other states and other service systems in the Commonwealth that include state and local actors and relationships;
- Development of recommendations for changes to the Commonwealth's publicly funded mental health service system; and
- Development of specific recommendations for statutory, regulatory, policy, or budgetary actions necessary to implement those recommendations.

In carrying out its work, the Work Group will seek information and assistance from the System Structure and Finance Expert Advisory Panel and various other experts to inform its work and will strive to identify and provide opportunity for comment by stakeholders. The Work Group will also receive updates from the Expert Advisory Panel on other work and initiatives currently underway as information is available. The Work Group will hold a number of meetings

throughout the interim to carry out its work and will report on its work to the full Joint Subcommittee at each meeting to receive input and direction from all members of the Joint Subcommittee. The Work Group will present final recommendations to the Joint Subcommittee in the fall of 2018.

Members of the Work Group then discussed the draft work plan. Delegate Bell noted the need to balance efforts to create statewide consistency around services with flexibility to allow localities to pursue local needs. He requested information on how other states address the issues of funding and flexibility. He also noted frequently voiced concerns about a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities and accountability within the publicly funded mental health system and requested that the Work Group focus on this issue as well in carrying out its work. He also requested that the Work Group and the Joint Subcommittee consider options for funding delivery of mental health services in jails by community services boards, as well as for follow-up care for individuals exiting jail.

Senator Barker noted the wide variation in local financial contributions to the publicly funded mental health service system in the Commonwealth and also the challenges posed by the different organization, structure, and composition of the community services boards. He asked that the Work Group consider options for incentivizing localities to develop cooperative approaches to expand the scope of services provided. He also asked that the Work Group consider the role of private providers of mental health services and options for enhancing relationships between the public and private mental health service systems, to optimize the Commonwealth's ability to provide mental health services to those in need.

Senator Hanger emphasized the importance of relationships with private providers in the delivery of mental health services in the Commonwealth and asked the Work Group to explore options for improving cooperation between the public and private systems.

Delegate Garrett agreed with the need to understand the publicly funded mental health service system as a whole and to understand what changes might need to be made to that system to maximize the efficiency and quality of service delivery. He also emphasized the need for data to support the Work Group's analysis and evaluations.

Senator Hanger also invited Margaret Nimmo Holland, a member of the System Structure and Finance Expert Advisory Panel, to comment on the proposed work plan. Ms. Holland stated that the work plan outlines some of the same issues the Expert Advisory Panel had discussed. She noted that initiatives currently underway, including implementation of STEP-VA, the financial realignment strategy, and the SPQM data system, will have an impact on the existing system and that it is important to understand the structural changes that will result from these initiatives and to take them into account in any discussion of changes to the structure of the Commonwealth's public mental health service system.

Senator Hanger also involved members of the public to comment on the proposed work plan. Ms. Jennifer Faison, Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards, noted the various initiatives currently underway, including implementation of STEP-VA, the financial realignment strategy, SPQM, and Medallion 4, and recommended that the Joint Subcommittee continue to focus on these initiatives. She also stated that the CCC+ program recently implemented by the Department of Medical Assistance Services continues to pose challenges, including issues around payment for services provided by community services boards and delivery of services to individuals in need. Implementing additional changes to a

system currently in flux could create larger problems. Ms. Faison also stated that additional financial support would be necessary for successful implementation of various initiatives under discussion. In closing, Ms. Faison noted that a few other states have changed the structure of their publicly funded mental health service systems and that data and information are available on their experiences.

Jennifer Fidura, Executive Director of the Virginia Network for Private Providers, spoke about the many components of the publicly funded mental health service system and noted that the vast majority of services are provided by private providers. The many changes to the system currently being implemented pose challenges for private providers.

Following public comment, the Work Group members voted to adopt the proposed work plan.

Next meeting

The next meeting of Work Group #1 (System Structure and Financing) will be held June 5, 2018, at Central State Hospital in Petersburg, Virginia.