

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

September 6, 2018

Richmond, Virginia

Meeting Summary

Members Present: Senator Deeds (Chair), Senator Barker, Delegate Bell, Delegate Garrett, Delegate Hope, Delegate Ransone, and Delegate Watts.

The Joint Subcommittee to Study Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century (the Joint Subcommittee) met on Thursday, September 6, 2018, at the Pocahontas Building in Richmond, Virginia.

Update on Work Group Activities

Senator Creigh Deeds provided an update on the activities of Work Group 1 - System Structure and Finance. He reported that the work group has received information on the structure and financing of the current mental health service system and is considering a number of changes. Additional information will be available at future meetings.

Delegate Robert Bell provided an update on the activities of Work Group 2 - Criminal Justice. He reported that the work group had been looking at ways to divert mentally ill individuals from the criminal justice system and to ensure that individuals involved with the criminal justice system received necessary mental health services. At its most recent meeting, the work group received information about mental health dockets and the need for local flexibility in testing various approaches to mental health dockets. At its next meeting, the work group will receive information about mental health services in jails.

Following the updates from the work groups, Senator Deeds suggested that the Joint Subcommittee study the process by which individuals are found not guilty of crimes by reason of insanity (NGRI) and regional variations in NGRI findings. Delegate Patrick Hope emphasized the need to study the issue of mental health services in prisons and the use of solitary confinement. Delegate Hope also suggested that the Joint Subcommittee should consider options for extending its work in light of the significant issues before it.

Future Meetings

Following discussion of the tour, Senator Deeds announced that the next meeting of the Joint Subcommittee will be held on Monday, October 1, 2018, in Northern Virginia. The location of the meeting is to be decided.