



Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century

November 12, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.

Pocahontas Building, Senate Subcommittee Room 1

dls.virginia.gov/interim_studies_MHS.html

The Joint Subcommittee Studying Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century (the Joint Subcommittee) met in Richmond with Senator R. Creigh Deeds, chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Joint Subcommittee's website](#).

Presentation: Overview of the SB1488 Work Group

The Honorable Daniel Carey, M.D., Secretary of Health and Human Resources

Dr. Carey began by discussing the purpose of the work group, which is examining the causes of the high census in state hospitals so that it can develop short- and long-term solutions to benefit individuals with mental illness. Dr. Carey stated that state agencies, law-enforcement officials, provider groups, community services boards, and advocates have discussed the causes of the high state hospital census, diverting admissions from state hospitals, caring for intoxicated and medically complex individuals, emergency custody orders (ECO), alternatives to emergency departments for evaluation and assessment, improving data collection and quality, and increasing community-based services.

Dr. Carey continued by presenting the group's consensus and nonconsensus recommendations. Consensus recommendations included supporting the continued build-out of community-based services and supports, addressing behavioral health workforce challenges, improving the civil commitment process, providing additional resources to treat individuals with medically complex conditions, and providing additional resources for individuals who are intoxicated or require detoxification. Nonconsensus recommendations included extending the ECO period, improving the temporary detention order (TDO) evaluation process, enhancing data collection, clarifying the role of Virginia's state psychiatric hospitals, and modifying the Bed of Last Resort legislation.

Dr. Carey concluded by highlighting how Virginia's investment in community-based mental health services compares to the nation, comparing state hospital and private hospital capacity and admission statistics, and summarizing the need to clearly define the role of state hospitals in Virginia going forward. Dr. Carey stated that the SB1488 work group report is forthcoming and in its final revision. Throughout the presentation, Dr. Carey responded to numerous questions

¹ **Members Present:** Senator R. Creigh Deeds, Senator George L. Barker, Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., Delegate Robert B. Bell, Delegate Patrick A. Hope, Delegate Margaret B. Ransone, Delegate L. Nick Rush, Delegate Vivian E. Watts

Members Absent: Senator John A. Cosgrove, Jr., Senator Janet D. Howell, Delegate Lashrecse D. Aird, Delegate T. Scott Garrett

from the members. Specifically, many members expressed concern over the plan to add additional beds to Catawba Hospital.

Presentation: Middle Peninsula Northern Neck CSB Hybrid CIT Program Proposal

Charles R. Walsh, Jr., Executive Director, Middle Peninsula Northern Neck Community Services Board

Mr. Walsh presented on the Middle Peninsula Northern Neck Community Services Board (the Board) proposal to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to create a mobile crisis intervention team (CIT) pilot program. The proposed pilot program is a hybrid model that will involve an on-call CIT-trained law-enforcement officer and an on-call peer support specialist to assist individuals in mental health crisis. Mr. Walsh stated that the proposal was submitted to DBHDS approximately 10 days prior to the meeting. Mr. Walsh and his colleagues fielded numerous questions from the members regarding the proposal and the logistical challenges faced by the Board.

Discussion: Preliminary Recommendations for 2020 Session

The members engaged in a preliminary discussion regarding potential Joint Subcommittee recommendations for the 2020 legislative session. The members discussed the need for more detailed information regarding the Behavioral Health Redesign and STEP-VA, specifically surrounding funding needs. The members discussed the need to develop a specific recommendation regarding funding formulas for community services boards. Additionally, the members discussed potential policy options surrounding mandatory outpatient treatment.

Public Comment

Several individuals addressed the Joint Subcommittee and shared their personal experiences, expressed various concerns, and made suggestions regarding mental health services in the Commonwealth.

For more information, see the [*Joint Subcommittee's website*](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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