

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

**July 1, 2015**

**Valley Community Services Board  
85 Sangers Lane, Staunton, Virginia**

**Members Present:** Senator R. Creigh Deeds (Chairman), Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., Senator George L. Barker, Senator John A. Cosgrove, Jr., Delegate Vivian E. Watts, Delegate T. Scott Garrett, Delegate Joseph R. Yost

The Joint Subcommittee to Study Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century (the Joint Subcommittee) met on Wednesday, July, 1, 2015, at Valley Community Services Board in Staunton, Virginia.

**Presentation: David Deering, Executive Director, Valley Community Services Board**

Mr. Deering provided an overview of the Valley Community Services Board (Valley CSB), its organization, the services it provides, its facilities, and its priorities and challenges. Mr. Deering noted that there are 40 unique community services boards and behavioral health authorities in Virginia and that a similar presentation from each would vary greatly.

Mr. Deering stated that the Valley CSB serves a population of 125,000 in Augusta County, Highland County, Waynesboro, and Staunton. The Joint Subcommittee inquired about the funding across localities. Mr. Deering noted that the Valley CSB has worked with the localities to find a fair allocation method. While the Valley CSB has not always received the 10 percent mandated local match, things have gotten better as it has worked towards a more fair allocation. The Joint Subcommittee noted that receiving the 10 percent mandated local match has been a problem for many CSBs.

Mr. Deering discussed the qualifications needed to become a pre-screener at the Valley CSB. Delegate Garrett inquired about the standardization of such qualifications. Valley CSB staff noted that they require their pre-screeners to understand and be able to work within their system because pre-screeners are required to do more than pre-screen.

Mr. Deering highlighted several services provided by the Valley CSB, including the "My Action Plan" card. Individuals with the "My Action Card" can present the card to law enforcement during an encounter, which gives the law-enforcement officer quick confirmation of the individual's mental health needs.

Delegate Watts inquired about the mandatory outpatient treatment services (MOT) provided by the Valley CSB. Mr. Deering noted that MOT has not been as successful as he and his staff would like but that the region has had a lot of success with drug courts and therapeutic dockets.

Sheriff Timothy Duff, of Highland County, stated that the telemedicine services implemented by Valley CSB have saved him and his staff a significant amount of time transporting individuals to the emergency department. In addition, Sheriff Duff reported that 100 percent of his deputies and dispatch personnel have received crisis intervention training and that this training has improved their response to individuals in mental health crisis.

Mr. Deering outlined the significant funding challenges the Valley CSB faces. The funding challenges have led the Valley CSB to close residential programs in favor of community-based programs. The Joint Subcommittee discussed the financial impact of additional Medicaid funding, the recently approved Governor's Access Plan for the Seriously Mentally Ill (GAP) program, and the possibility of standardizing services across community services boards.

### **Public Comment**

Senator Deeds asked if any members of the public would like to speak. The brother of a resident in a residential facility scheduled to be closed commented on the hardship the closing would cause his brother. The Joint Subcommittee discussed the challenges the man's brother faces. After further public comment, Senator Deeds adjourned the meeting.