

From the Commissioner's Desk

June 5, 2014

WELCOME

I would like to welcome you to the first installment of "From the Commissioner's Desk," which will include monthly updates on major system developments. I am committed to ensuring you have the opportunity to be well informed on issues affecting our work and the people we serve.

MAJOR UPDATES

June 16 Soft Launch of Civil Commitment Laws – The 2014 General Assembly Session passed a number of legislative changes to Virginia's civil commitment laws that are scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2014. CSBs, state facilities and their safety net partners, including local hospitals, law enforcement and others, have developed new regional admission protocols based on these new laws. DBHDS is planning a "soft launch" in advance of the July 1 enactment to help identify any procedural issues and pressure points that can be addressed before the July 1 effective date. **The soft launch will begin on June 16, 2014 at 8:30 a.m.** and at that time, DBHDS and CSBs will operate as if all aspects of the new legislation are in effect (with the exception of the 8-hour emergency custody order period which cannot take effect until July 1). The changes include:

- Implementation of new statutory notification requirements, such as between law enforcement and CSBs at the time an ECO is executed, between CSBs and state hospitals when a CSB is notified of the need for an emergency evaluation, and between CSBs and state hospitals upon completion of an ECO evaluation;
- Implementation of regional admission protocols (to be completed June 13, 2014);
- Referral to primary state facility when alternative facility of temporary detention cannot be found; and
- Use of alternative facilities when primary state hospital is at full capacity or otherwise cannot serve as "facility of last resort."

DBHDS will be creating a new page on its website as a one-stop reference source for the new laws. This page will continue to evolve as more information becomes available. A link will be found on the homepage at www.dbhds.virginia.gov. It is critical that CSB executive directors use this information along with the regional protocols to ensure all emergency services workers and other staff involved in the commitment process are fully informed of the changes and of the new procedures for emergency custody and temporary detention.

Office of Recovery Support – As you know, our system is currently undergoing a time of change. We must transform and strengthen our system for those with mental health disorders, substance abuse disorders and developmental disabilities. As the system improves and changes, I believe it is more important than ever to hold unswervingly to our core values, among them that recovery for every person with a mental illness is the expectation. So it is truly a pleasure to announce that DBHDS will be establishing an Office of Recovery Support; a full-time position, reporting directly to the Commissioner and serving as a member of the Department's Executive Team. The major responsibility for this position will be to advise both the Department and the community on expanding and enriching our recovery support services, certification of peer support specialists and infusing the principles of recovery and resiliency throughout Virginia's service system. I am committed to infusing the principles of recovery and resiliency in all aspects of our system in a way that is sustainable and provides rich opportunity for growth.

Southside Virginia Training Center – On May 21, the last four individuals residing at Southside Virginia Training Center (SVTC) moved to new community homes. Staff are now conducting final closure activities and the facility will officially close on June 30, 2014. We are grateful to the community services boards, private providers and staff who worked intensely with individuals and family members to locate the best fit in a new home where individuals are living full life in their own communities.

Governor's Taskforce on Improving Mental Health Services and Crisis Response – The four taskforce workgroups met in Richmond on May 21 to make recommendations for the upcoming meeting of the full taskforce. A report with the

taskforce’s recommendations is due October 1, 2014. More information can be found [here](#). Here is a meeting schedule of the remaining meetings:

- Full Taskforce Meeting – June 16, 2014, 12-3 p.m., Virginia Department of Health Professions
- Meeting of the Four Workgroups – July 15, 2014, 1-4 p.m., Location TBD
- Full Taskforce Meeting – August 11, 2014, 1-4 p.m., Virginia Department of Health Professions

DBHDS DOJ Settlement Agreement Stakeholder Group – This group met in Richmond on May 21. The meeting included updates on implementation of the agreement, housing initiatives, CMS rules, budget, the discharge process and enhanced case management. More information can be found [here](#).

Recovery Forum – A successful recovery forum was held from May 29 – May 30. Representatives from CSBs, state facilities, and peer/advocacy organizations will gather to continue to learn and develop strategies for embedding a recovery-oriented culture within our services for individuals and families with mental health challenges and/or substance-use disorders. The forum is part of a broader national effort called the Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale Technical Assistance Center Strategy (known by the acronym “BRSS TACS,” pronounced “brass tacks”). This national project is driven by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to promote the wide-scale adoption of recovery-oriented supports, services and systems for people in recovery from substance use and/or mental health conditions. Guest speakers will include Dr. Arthur Evans, Jr., Ph.D., Commissioner of Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities, Dr. Daniel Fisher, M.D., Ph.D., Executive Director of the National Empowerment Center; and Patty McCarthy Metcalf, M.S., BRSS TACS Deputy Project Director/ Senior Associate with the Center for Social Innovation.

John Pezzoli Retirement – As most of you are aware, Chief Deputy Commissioner John Pezzoli announced his decision last week to retire on September 1, 2014. We will deeply miss his expertise, energy and graciousness. We are sorry to see him go but are excited for him as he begins this new chapter of life. Thank you so much, John, for over four decades of devotion to people with behavioral health disorders and developmental disabilities and their families. Well done!

RECENT FACTS & FIGURES

Training Center Census (May 31, 2014)

Name	July 1, 2012 Census	July 1, 2013 Census	Dec 31, 2013 Census	May 31, 2014 Census
SVTC - Closure: By 6/30/2014	201	114	57	0
NVTC - Closure: By 6/30/2015	153	135	115	108
SWVTC - Closure: By 6/30/2018	173	156	150	149
CVTC - Closure: By 6/30 2020	350	301	285	292
SEVTC - Remains open at 75 beds	106	84	81	75
Total	983	790	688	623

ID and DD Waiver Enrollment and Waiting Lists (May 31, 2014)

	ID Waiver	DD Waiver
Total Enrolled	9,907	947

Urgent Waitlist	4,174	
Non-Urgent Waitlist	2,871	
Total Waitlist	7,045	1,455

Mental Health Hospital, Hiram Davis and VCBR Census (June 1, 2014)

Name	June 2014
Catawba	105
Central State Hospital	206
Eastern State Hospital	263
Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute	124
Southern Virginia Mental Health Institute	68
Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute	159
Western State Hospital	233
Piedmont Geriatric Hospital	112
Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents	39
Hiram Davis Medical Center	67
Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation	346
Total	1,722

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