

POLICY MANUAL

State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services

POLICY 1040 (SYS) 06-3 Consumer and Family Member Involvement and Participation

Authority Board Minutes Dated April 7, 2006
Effective Date April 7, 2006
Approved by Board Chairman /s/ Victoria Huber Cochran

References § 37.2-100, § 37.2-200, § 37.2-204, § 37.2-316, § 37.2-501, § 37.2-504,
§ 37.2-602, and § 37.2-605 of the *Code of Virginia* (1950), as amended
STATE BOARD POLICY 1034 (SYS) 05-1 Partnership Agreement
STATE BOARD POLICY 1036 (SYS) 05-3 Vision Statement

Background Section 37.2-100 of the *Code of Virginia* defines a consumer as a current direct recipient of public or private mental health, mental retardation, or substance abuse treatment or habilitation services, and it defines a family member as an immediate family member or the principal caregiver of a consumer. A principal caregiver is a person who acts in the place of an immediate family member, including other relatives and foster care providers, but does not have a proprietary interest in the care of the consumer.

Section 37.2-200 states that one member of the Board shall be a consumer or former consumer, one member shall be a family of a consumer or former consumer, and one member shall be a consumer or former consumer or a family member of a consumer or former consumer. Section 37.2-204 states that one-third of the appointments made to state or local human rights committees shall be current or former consumers or family members of current or former consumers, with at least two consumers on each committee who are receiving or have received public or private mental health, mental retardation, or substance abuse treatment or habilitation services within five years of their initial appointments. Section 37.2-316 states that any state and community consensus and planning team considering any restructuring of the system of mental health services involving an existing state hospital shall include consumers and family members.

Sections 37.2-501 and 37.2-602 state that one-third of the appointments to community services boards and behavioral health authorities, hereinafter referred to as CSBs, shall be identified consumers or former consumers or family

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Background
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members of consumers or former consumers, at least one of whom shall be a consumer receiving services. Compliance with these statutory requirements is the responsibility of the cities and counties that established the CSBs, rather than of the CSBs themselves. CSBs report the numbers of board members who are consumers, former consumers, family members of consumers, and family members of former consumers in their annual community services performance contracts with the Department. Sections 37.2-504 and 37.2-605 state that CSBs shall take all necessary and appropriate actions to maximize the involvement and participation of consumers and family members in policy formulation and services planning, delivery, and evaluation.

STATE BOARD POLICY 1034 establishes the Central Office, State Facility, and Community Services Board Partnership Agreement and lists core values that shall be included in the agreement. One of those values states, "Participation by the consumer or the consumer's authorized representative in treatment planning and service evaluation is necessary and valuable and has a positive effect on service quality and outcomes."

STATE BOARD POLICY 1036 articulates a vision statement to guide the development and operations of the public mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services system. The vision promotes self-determination, empowerment, recovery, resilience, health, and the highest possible level of consumer participation in all aspects of community life including work, school, family and other meaningful relationships. This vision also includes the principles of inclusion, participation, and partnership. This policy requires the Department, state facilities, and CSBs to incorporate this vision in their policies, procedures, and daily operations.

Purposes

To articulate the importance of consumer and family member involvement and participation in Virginia's public mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services system and identify ways in which the Department, state hospitals and training centers, hereinafter referred to as state facilities, and CSBs can support the involvement and participation of consumers and family members as partners in the design, operation, and evaluation of the public services system.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board that consumers and family members shall be invited, encouraged, and supported to participate and be involved in the development, operation, and evaluation of Virginia's public mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services system to the greatest extent possible at local, regional, and state levels through the following activities:

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Policy

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- analyzing, formulating, and implementing policies;
- planning services and designing programs;
- providing direct services;
- advocating for resources and fulfilling unmet needs for services;
- monitoring and evaluating services, providers, and the services system; and
- providing accountability and engaging in quality improvement activities.

It is also the policy of the Board that the Department, state facilities, and CSBs support consumer and family member involvement and participation in these activities through:

- seeking the participation of significant numbers of consumers and family members on committees, work groups, task forces, and other planning or deliberative bodies;
- involving consumers and family members from the initial stages of planning and implementing service system initiatives, including determining local, regional, or statewide needs and identifying innovative approaches, developing plans and budgets, and providing services to address those needs;
- providing opportunities for consumers and family members to learn about system issues in which they will be involved;
- funding, providing, or supporting to the greatest extent practicable training that will enable consumers and family members to develop the skills, such as assertiveness, leadership, teamwork, communication, and advocacy, and the knowledge, such as planning, budgeting, evaluation, parliamentary procedure, and legislation, for them to participate effectively;
- assisting with travel, child care, or lodging expenses to the greatest extent possible when this would enable consumers or family members to participate;
- employing consumers in suitable positions in their organizations, including, where feasible and to the extent practicable, positions that provide oversight, guidance, and monitoring; and
- recruiting, training, and supporting consumers and family members to serve as board members and advocating their appointment with appointing authorities.

Further, it is the policy of the Board that CSBs work closely with the boards of supervisors or city councils and county administrators or city managers of their local governments to help them meet or exceed the membership requirements in § 37.2-501 or § 37.2-602 of the *Code of Virginia*. The Department shall assist CSBs in working with their local governments, including helping to identify sources for appointments of consumers and family members who are knowledgeable about the services system and have public participation skills.

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Policy
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It is also the policy of the Board that the Department, state facilities, and CSBs encourage, support, fund, assist, monitor, and evaluate consumer-run or provided services and supports to the greatest extent practicable. These services and supports may operate independently of, in partnership with, or by an agreement or contract with the Department, CSBs, or state facilities. Consumers must be involved substantively in the design, leadership, administration, and day-to-day operation of these services and supports. Examples of these services and supports include community education; crisis prevention, intervention, and respite; drop-in centers; employment services or employment readiness support; outreach to individuals; housing; peer case management; peer companion or mentoring services; peer counseling; recovery and wellness education; recreation and arts; support groups; and technical assistance to develop consumer-delivered services.

Further, it is the policy of the Board that the Department, state facilities, and CSBs include a provision in their contracts with private and other public service providers to require compliance with the provisions of this policy that are applicable to their operations.

Finally, it is the policy of the Board that the Department, state facilities, and CSBs monitor and seek feedback from consumers and family members about their efforts to invite, encourage, and support the involvement and participation of consumers and family members in their operations and periodically report the results of this feedback to the Board.
