



Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Services in Virginia Working Together to Build a System of Care

(Study authorized by 2004 Virginia General Assembly, Budget Item 330-F)

FACT SHEET

Approximately 70% of children with mental health problems do not receive the treatment they need. Children with untreated mental disorders are at higher risk for school failure, dropping out, violence, drug abuse, suicide, and criminal activity. (Voices for Virginia's Children, 2005)

- One of every five of Virginia's children (approximately 62,000) has a behavioral health disorder that impairs their functioning at home, in schools, and in the community
- Almost a quarter (23%) of the children and youth in state custody have been placed there by their parents solely to receive necessary behavioral health services (Virginia Mental Health Block Grant, 2005)
- 24% of the population of Virginia is under the age of 14; 14% of healthcare funds are spent on children; and only 7% mental health expenditures go to children under the age of 18 (Landers, 2001)
- In FY 2004, more than one out of four of CSA children (27%) received residential services, accounting for 47% of CSA's state pool expenditures. Residential services include group homes, residential treatment facilities, and psychiatric hospital care (OCS, CSA Data Set)

Over the past decade, multiple studies of children's behavioral health care in Virginia have repeatedly identified the same significant problems and recommended similar solutions.

It's Time to Act!

Study Conclusions

- Current resources are inadequate to meet the behavioral health needs of children.
- Rural areas have even fewer available services; in fact, the Federal government considers a significant portion of Virginia to be an underserved area.
- The existing structure and funding for Virginia's Comprehensive Services Act has created systemic barriers that inhibit access to services for many children.
- Families and providers repeatedly cite both a lack of access to and knowledge of available services and poor coordination and collaboration between service providers.

Solutions

- **Build a strong system of care across Virginia—a system that has everyone working together with families and their children**
- **Fund elements of a system of care:**
 - **Implement more evidence-based programs that reduce the rate of youth recidivism in the juvenile justice system (\$4 million per year to expand the number of pilot sites from two to eight)**
 - **Build on the proven success of mental health programs in local detention centers to help prepare youth to become productive citizens (\$240,000 per year for four additional CSB/Detention Center collaborations)**
 - **Create partnerships between CSBs and schools to help children succeed in school (\$1.8 million per year for 20 pilot schools in five regions)**
 - **Train more child psychiatrists and psychologists to work in Virginia, and train other health care professionals in evidence-based practices in behavioral health (\$1.7 million per year)**
 - **Build a strong statewide Family Support Coalition by linking existing family support organizations to educate parents and professionals about children's mental health, and to increase family involvement in the development and implementation of local and state systems of care (\$500,000 per year)**

It is time to act! Please make vulnerable children a high priority in Virginia by acting on these solutions and investing \$8.24 million this year as a down payment on their futures.

This Fact Sheet is sponsored by the VA INFO (Virginia Integrated Network of Family Organizations).

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