

**MINUTES
OF THE
SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES COUNCIL
APRIL 10, 2019
MARY McMASTERS, M.D., CHAIR
VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARDS
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Charlene Motley, *Commission on the Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program*
Anna Burton, *Department of Corrections*
Leslie Elgen, *Department of Criminal Justice Services*
Aja Ferguson, *Department of Criminal Justice Services*
Mellie Randall, *Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services*
Parham Jaber, MD, *Department of Health*
Maureen Mayer, *Department of Juvenile Justice*
Ke'shawn Harper, *Department of Medical Assistance Services*
Fran Inge, *Department of Social Services*
Henry Harper, *Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth*
Delegate C.E. (Cliff) Hayes, Jr., *Virginia House of Delegates*
Delegate Patrick A. Hope, *Virginia House of Delegates*
Mary McMasters, M.D., *Advocate*

GUESTS:

Michael Satterlind, *Alkermes*
Mark Blackwell, *Dept. of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services*
Mary McQuown, *Dept. of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services*
Andrew Mitchell, *Joint Commission on Health Care*
Jen Swyegh, *McGuire Woods Consulting*
Peter Breslon, MD, *American Society of Addiction Medicine, Virginia Chapter*

STAFF:

Kate Marshall, *Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services*

- I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.** Dr. McMasters called the meeting to order and asked members and others present to introduce themselves and share what organization they represented.
- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF APRIL 10, 2019.** Minutes were accepted by voice vote with corrections by Dr. McMasters. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Ms. Motley and Delegate Hope seconded it.
- III. NEW BUSINESS.**
- A. Presentation: Mary McQuown, Peer Recovery Specialist Mark Blackwell, Office of Recovery Services Director both with the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services presented on Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) in

Virginia. They discussed certification and the pathways to become a CPRS in VA. When the process began, it allowed individuals who were already serving in the role of peer advisor to apply to be “grandfathered” which resulted in 464 individuals becoming certified for two years. Those persons who were grandfathered had their two-year mark at the end of 2018 and DBHDS is aware that about 100 have not recertified. These individuals have 12 months to recertify and will then have to go through the entire process as if they had never been certified. They must be registered with the Board of Counseling for their services to be billed to Medicaid and to be certified.

Registration is for the purpose of billing, if your employer isn't billing for the Peer, the Peer doesn't need to get registered. This process maintains opportunities for natural Peer Supports so that all peers don't have to be certified. CSBs want to bill so they are looking for certified/registered peers. CPRS may include family support partner. NCRSS – certified by NAADAC. However, even someone who is certified by NAADAC has to take the Virginia training. Training is offered specifically for the Veteran's system. Since Jan 2017, 1,330 individuals have participated in the Virginia training. .

Cost for recertification is \$75 – certification is \$175 (Office of Recovery SVS is offering a discount until mid-2019 for the registration to be \$25.) Mr. Blackwell indicated to be registered, you have to be certified. But once a person is registered, he or she can be registered without being certified. The process has been operating for two years and there is an increase in registered peers, but decrease in certified peers. Peers must register every year for \$30 with Board of Counseling. Virginia Medicaid reimburses at \$6.50/15 minutes for individual sessions and \$2.70 for group/15 minute.

A 72-hr training is classroom/face-to-face due to the way material is put together for in-person (60-hr classroom, 12 hours homework). Six of the 20 hours have to be in ethics Virginia Medicaid requires that peers must be directly supervised by either a licensed person, a Qualified Mental Health Professional with two years of experience, and the direct supervisor must also participate in specialized training about the role of peers. If PRS is working with someone who needs additional services they can't provide, they would refer to higher level of care.

Ms. Motley asked if training was in-person. Ms. McQuown responded that all trainings are in person on purpose to build support among the individuals who are participating. The required training includes 60 hours of contact training and 12 hours of homework.

Mr. Harper was interested in knowing what credentialing agencies can provide continuing education credits, because the Virginia Foundation offers trainings and are offering to have those advertised on the peer website. Ms. McQuown informed the group that peers can get continuing education credits from many sources; VA Certification Board (VCB) approves sources relevant to peer support in behavioral health field. For example VOCAL does trainings all year that are approved by VCB.

Ms. Randall shared that certification is for both mental health and substance use disorders because many people have co-occurring disorders.

Ms. Ferguson asked how to find training that qualifies, and how often DBHDS offers training and how the trainings are publicized. Peers may get frustrated because they think they finished the process, only to find out there's another step. Ms. McQuown stated that trainings are posted on the DBHDS website, which also lists all the trainers, contact information, listed by region. Individuals can contact trainers and find out when there is a training and how much it will cost. There is also a website list with approved training by region. www.Trilliumdropincenter.org/cprs/trainers. Ms. McQuown further stated the 72-hr training may be presented by trainers, not just by DBHDS. Initially twelve individuals were trained as trainers to use the same curriculum and were required to provide a free training. After the free training, they are free agents after that and can charge what they want. Range of training prices varies from free to residents in Hampton to \$800 – 1,000 other areas to cover the cost of printing, space and time, depending on what support/resources the trainer has. Currently, there are 64 approved trainers. In Region 3, a Train the Trainer for Family Support Trainers is scheduled for September.

Ms. Harper attended a peer conference last year where participants talked about the 500 hours of required supervision being a barrier, while having to go without pay. Mr. Blackwell clarified that internships are generally not paid, although in Northern Virginia, some CSBs and organizations offered paid internships and still have a problem getting peers. Sometimes individuals participating in the training have no intention of seeking employment. Ms. Harper wondered if the billing rate, although comparable to other states, are a hindrance because of how it is quoted as a 15-min rate rather than hourly. Mr. Blackwell said that through STEP-VA, CSBs are looking at ways to identify and address gaps, and working with DMAS to look at rates.

Mr. Blackwell indicated that Virginia Commonwealth University is under contract to develop a report that identifies barriers to becoming a Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist in Virginia, and that the report is expected to be complete in September. Council members expressed interest in reviewing this report.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT. There were no public comments

VI. ADJOURNMENT. Ms. Motley made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Mr. Harper. The motion was passed on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Marshall
Staff to the Council