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March 18, 2021

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**ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION NOW AVAILABLE FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN STATEWIDE**  
*New service for individuals under a temporary detention order marks a significant advancement for the treatment of people experiencing a mental health crisis*

**RICHMOND, VA** – The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) announced that alternative transportation is now available statewide for children and adults experiencing a mental health crisis. In 2018, DBHDS contracted with [G4S](#) to begin a three-year regional rollout of alternative transportation services in Virginia for people experiencing a mental health crisis who are under a temporary detention order (TDO) and clinically assessed to be appropriate for such transportation. The new alternative transportation services are now available statewide 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Alternative transportation fundamentally changes how children and adults under TDO are transported from the evaluation site (typically in private hospital emergency departments) to inpatient psychiatric treatment. Without alternative transportation, most individuals who need to be transported are placed in a law enforcement vehicle and may be handcuffed even though the vast majority committed no crime. The unintended consequences of this practice can intensify trauma. The new service uses secure, unmarked vehicles with specially trained drivers who are unarmed and wearing plain clothes. The result is a safe and secure transportation that is focused on recovery and engagement in treatment.

"Expanding alternative transportation statewide is an exciting and significant step forward in how we treat people who need involuntary hospitalization," said **Secretary of Health and Human Resources Daniel Carey, MD**. "By being transported in a more therapeutic manner, it is our hope that we will see positive effects in treatment outcomes for individuals in crisis."

"The roll-out of alternative transportation across Virginia is the result of years of work by countless people to transform the way we treat individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis," said **DBHDS Commissioner Alison Land**. "By offering this trauma-informed and secure approach, we can help ensure that individuals in crisis are able to keep their focus where it belongs: on treatment and recovery. Many thanks to our partners at the CSBs, law enforcement, private hospitals, local magistrates, and others who have helped make this goal a reality."

Alternative transportation also alleviates the burden on law enforcement, who historically provided nearly all of the statewide transportation services of people under a TDO. Law enforcement will continue to be valuable partners in this process and will transport individuals who do not meet criteria for alternative transportation due to safety concerns.

As of March 10, 2021, G4S completed 2,246 safe transports statewide since the first trip in October 2019. The average trip statewide is 190 miles. These efforts have saved law enforcement over 5,000

hours of time. DBHDS expects these numbers to increase now that the option is available statewide and awareness of the service grows.

### **Additional Background**

- G4S operates out of eight hubs strategically located throughout the state based on historic TDO data and access to major thoroughfares.
- There are currently 23 alternative transportation vehicles statewide, five of which are upfitted to transport children who need a car or booster seat.
- Virginia averages about 25,000 total TDOs for adults and children per year.
- The statewide regional rollouts for alternative transportation occurred as follows:
  - *Region 3 (Southwest/Southern)*: October 2019
  - *Region 1 (Western)*: January 2020
  - *Region 5 (Eastern/Southeast)*: August 2020
  - *Region 2 (Northern)*: November 2020
  - *Region 4 (Central)*: March 2021

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*The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) seeks to promote dignity, choice, recovery, and the highest possible level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life for individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities or substance-use disorders. DBHDS operates 12 state facilities and partners with 40 locally-run community services boards and hundreds of private providers statewide. For more information, please visit [www.dbhds.virginia.gov](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#).*