



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 6, 2026**

**Media Contact: Lauren Cunningham**

**[Lauren.Cunningham@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:Lauren.Cunningham@dbhds.virginia.gov)**

**Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental  
Services Works with Five Localities to Introduce New  
Initiative to Support People in Jail with Serious Mental Illness**

*Jail-Based Restoration Units offer a treatment-focused alternative in  
partnership with community services boards, jails, and courts*

**RICHMOND, VA** — The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), in partnership with Arlington County, the City of Virginia Beach, and Richmond Behavioral Health Authority, announced the launch of Jail-Based Restoration Units (JBRUs) in three jails to improve the quality of care for people in jail with serious mental illness. These units are located at Arlington Detention Center, Virginia Beach Correctional Center, and Riverside Regional Jail in Prince George County.

With JBRUs, participants reside in dedicated therapeutic units staffed by a multidisciplinary team of clinicians and officers trained in mental illness, competency restoration, and trauma-informed practices. These units allow participants to access comprehensive behavioral healthcare through group and individual treatment, discharge planning, and medication management.

“Far too many Virginians with serious mental illness have sat in jail, scared and confused, while waiting for care they desperately need,” **said Secretary of Health and Human Resources Marvin B. Figueroa**. “These Jail-Based Restoration Units can change that. By bringing evidence-based treatment directly into jail settings, we can help people move through the competency process more quickly, reduce unnecessary delays, and ease pressure on our state hospitals. It is exactly the kind of practical innovation Virginia needs more of.”

According to the State Compensation Board’s [2025 Mental Illness in Jails report](#), 22.4% of individuals held in Virginia jails are known or suspected to have a mental illness, and 12.24% are identified as having a serious mental illness. The majority of individuals with serious mental illness in jails are pretrial, highlighting the need for timely access to treatment and restoration services.

The General Assembly funded these awards through allocations in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 to create alternatives to inpatient, state hospital care. An additional benefit to providing these services in jails is reducing the forensic population in state hospitals, many of which regularly operate at or above their capacity. In fiscal year 2026, close to one-third of patients were admitted for restoration at a state hospital after being found incompetent to stand trial on a

misdeemeanor-only offense. Research shows that that JBRUs can restore people in less time than if hospitalized, providing swifter access to treatment, and costing significantly less than inpatient hospitalization.

“This partnership reflects our commitment to improving outcomes for individuals with serious mental illness who are involved in the justice system,” said **DBHDS Commissioner Daryl Washington, LCSW**. “By strengthening collaboration between the community services boards, jails, and courts, we are working to ensure individuals receive timely, coordinated care that supports recovery and continuity across systems, while also improving the overall system of care by providing alternatives to hospitalization.”

“This program helps eligible individuals receive the services they need sooner while maintaining the safety and security of our correctional facility,” said **Sheriff Rocky Holcomb, Virginia Beach**. “It also supports our courts, relieves pressure on our state hospitals and reflects our commitment to addressing mental health needs responsibly and compassionately. This is a true partnership. Our deputies provide the secure environment, and our behavioral health partners provide the specialized clinical care. Neither agency could accomplish this alone.”

“The Arlington County Sheriff’s Office is committed to finding innovative ways to improve outcomes for individuals in our care while strengthening public safety,” said **Sheriff Jose Quiroz, Arlington County**. “By providing these services in a dedicated therapeutic setting within our facility, we have the opportunity to deliver timely, clinically appropriate care while helping ease the demand for limited restoration beds at state hospitals. Just as importantly, this model allows individuals to remain closer to their families, legal counsel, and local support systems throughout the restoration process. This initiative reflects my commitment to treating mental illness with compassion, professionalism, and evidence-based practices. Through the collaboration of specially trained sheriff’s office staff, behavioral health professionals, and our state partners, we are building a safer, more effective system that better serves our community and those entrusted to our care.”

“When individuals confined within jails experience delays in receiving treatment for mental illness, everyone is impacted—the individual, the courts, victims, and the community,” said **Lieutenant Colonel Tojuanna Y. Mack, Assistant Superintendent, Riverside Regional Jail**. “A jail-based restoration unit helps bridge that gap by bringing treatment to where it is needed most, allowing us to provide care sooner while supporting the efficient administration of justice.”

In addition to the new JBRUs, DBHDS is also partnering with local organizations across Virginia to reduce forensic admissions to state hospitals and improve care for individuals in the justice system. DBHDS collaborated with New River Valley Community Services, the New River Valley Regional Jail, and the Montgomery and Pulaski General District Court to pilot two court clinician positions who will work with courts, attorneys, and jails to identify alternatives and divert people with serious mental illness from jail. DBHDS also provided funding to Northwestern Community Services Board (NWCSB) to launch a Competency Restoration and Transition Team based at the Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center (NRADC). In addition to providing competency restoration services in the jail, their team of providers will seamlessly coordinate and provide treatment and reentry services from the jail to the community upon release.

“Implementing a dedicated court clinician is cutting-edge work for our community,” said **Chris**

**Taylor, LCSW, SHRM-CP, New River Valley Community Services.** “It allows us to move people into timely, appropriate treatment instead of incarceration, improves outcomes for the jail, and helps us reach more individuals with the services that change lives. We are deeply grateful to DBHDS for their continued support and partnership in making this opportunity a reality.”

“The Restoration Alternatives Program (RAP) represents an important step forward in addressing the needs of low-level offenders experiencing a mental health crisis,” said **Patrick Jensen, Commonwealth’s Attorney, Montgomery County.** “By connecting eligible individuals with appropriate treatment and services, RAP has the potential to reduce the amount of time they spend in jail or state hospitals while allowing their cases to be resolved more efficiently. We are grateful for the collaboration that made this program possible, and everyone in the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office looks forward to seeing the positive impact RAP will have on our community.”

“As Superintendent of the New River Valley Regional Jail, I appreciate the opportunity to partner with DBHDS and New River Valley Community Services on the Restoration Alternatives Program,” said **Kim Haug, Superintendent, New River Valley Regional Jail.** “This initiative reflects a shared commitment to long-term recovery for justice-involved individuals. Increasing access to behavioral health services while navigating the legal process not only benefits the individual, but the entire community.”

“NWCSB is excited about our growing partnership with DBHDS and NRADC that now includes active forensic discharge planning, peer supports, and community restoration services for incarcerated individuals,” said **Ellen D. Harrison, Chief Executive Officer, Northwestern Community Services Board.** “NRADC serves an important role within our justice system while also voicing their commitment to ensuring that incarcerated persons have access to needed services that follow them from within the detention center to the community where they will reside. This carefully orchestrated transition is key to a different and successful beginning upon release.”

###

### **About the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services**

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) supports individuals by promoting recovery, self-determination, and wellness in all aspects of life. DBHDS facilitates a complex system of community-based behavioral health care and services for individuals with developmental disabilities as well as operating nine behavioral health facilities, one training center, one medical center, and one behavioral rehabilitation center. DBHDS also licenses and contracts with Virginia’s 40 locally-run community services boards and licenses thousands of private providers of community services. For more information, please visit [www.dbhds.virginia.gov](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov), and find DBHDS on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).