

Budget amendments and legislation supported by the Behavioral Health Commission 2026 Session

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Recommendation / option	Original Patrons	Item	Final Budget
Implementation and effectiveness of Marcus Alert program			
Provide \$3.6 million the first year and \$7.8 million the second year to fund the implementation of Marcus Alert for the remaining 13 CSBs that have not yet begun their implementation. (Recommendation 4)	Senate: Deeds House: Willett	Item 301.JJ.	✓
Provide \$150,000 each year and one position for a Marcus Alert evaluation analyst at DBHDS to collect and analyze data and staff the Marcus Alert evaluation task force, pursuant to House Bill 225 of the 2026 General Assembly. (Recommendation 6)	Senate: Deeds House: Hope	Not included	✗
Remove language that provides a fixed \$600,000 annual allocation per Marcus Alert program and allow for greater flexibility to reflect variation in community size, infrastructure, and implementation readiness. (Option 1)	Senate: Aird	Item 301.JJ.	✓
Provide \$1.4 million the first year to establish pilot programs that would enable regional mobile crisis response teams to be dispatched from 911 call centers to individuals in crisis. Identical to Option 1 from crisis study. (Option 3)	Senate: Aird House: Willett	Not included	✗
Provide \$125,000 each year to support a full-time statewide co-response coordinator to track, support, and develop best practices for co-response times. Co-response teams in Virginia vary widely and there is limited state guidance or oversight to ensure they maximize their potential for diverting individuals from the criminal justice system. (Option 4)	Senate: Perry House: Watts	Not included	✗

Recommendation / option	Original Patrons	Item	Final Budget
Aligning crisis services and the civil commitment process			
Provide \$1.4 million the first year to establish pilot programs that would enable regional mobile crisis response teams to be dispatched from 911 call centers to individuals in crisis who are at high risk of coming under an ECO but who do not present an imminent public safety risk. Identical to Option 3 from Marcus Alert study. (Option 1)	Senate: Aird House: Willett	Not Included	
Create a workgroup led by the HHR Secretary to identify the regulatory, billing, or training changes required to enable regional mobile crisis response teams to be dispatched based on calls from third parties (e.g., family members, concerned citizens). (Option 2)	Senate: Favola House: McLaughlin	Not Included	
Direct DBHDS to identify strategies to incentivize CSBs to serve more individuals subject to an ECO or TDO in CRCs and CSUs that currently exist or that are under development/ consideration by modeling a “no-barrier” approach, and report to the Chairs of HAC, SFAC, and BHC by December 1, 2027. (Option 3) <i>Final budget delays recommended reporting date from December 1, 2026 to December 1, 2027.</i>	Senate: Favola House: Willett	Item 299.RR.	
STEP-VA performance and evaluation			
Appropriate STEP-VA funding as one amount rather than setting out appropriations for each STEP, beginning with the 2026-2028 Appropriation Act. (Recommendation 1) <i>Final budget directs DBHDS to collect data on STEP-VA services and to assess whether flexibility may be necessary to reallocate funds among STEPs to match community needs.</i>	Senate: Deeds House: Willett	Item 301.II.16.	
Convene a taskforce led by the HHR Secretary to develop a strategic vision for STEP-VA; and provide \$2.0 million the first year to hire a third-party vendor to conduct a comprehensive statewide and CSB-level needs assessments for services included in STEP-VA. (Option 1 & 5)	Senate: Aird House: McClure	Not Included	

			FINAL
Recommendation / option	Original Patrons	Item	Final Budget
Direct DBHDS and DMAS to assist CSBs with conducting an analysis of their Medicaid revenue, including: enrollment in Medicaid compared to eligibility; MCO denial rates; time spent on billing, Medicaid losses experienced on STEP-VA services and collections from patients. DBHDS and DMAS should work with CSBs to create an action plan that identifies the changes needed to maximize Medicaid revenue, how changes will be implemented, and on what timeline; and report to the Chairs of HAC, SFAC, and BHC by November 1, 2027. <i>Final budget requires DBHDS to include in the annual CSB performance contracts a requirement to maximize billing of Medicaid services provided to Medicaid-eligible clients and to report to DBHDS on total Medicaid revenue each year.</i> (Option 3)	Senate: Perry House: McLaughlin	Item 299.UU.	
Direct DMAS to identify the steps necessary to transition Medicaid reimbursement to a prospective payment system (PPS) designed to support services provided through the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model; estimate the one-time and ongoing fiscal impact to the state and CSBs of shifting to the PPS model; and report to the Chairs of HAC and SFAC by December 1, 2026. (Option 4)	Senate: Deeds House: Hope	Item 295.SS.	
Follow up to 2025 recommendation			
Autism Commission			
Fund and staff a permanent Autism Commission.	Senate: Aird House: Willett	Not Included	
Member recommendation			
Local match of CSB state funding			
Direct DBHDS to examine alternatives to the current 10 percent local match requirement on state funding for CSBs and to report to the Chairs of HAC and SFAC by November 1, 2027. <i>Final budget delays recommended reporting date from November 1, 2026 to November 1, 2027.</i>	Senate: Favola	Item 299.SS.	

LEGISLATION

Recommendation / option	Patron	Bill number	Final status
BHC staff studies			
Implementation and effectiveness of Marcus Alert program			
Require DBHDS to convene a Marcus Alert Evaluation Task Force to assist in determining the effectiveness of the Marcus Alert system. (Recommendation 6)	Sen. Deeds	SB 514	Acts of Assembly ✓
	Del. Hope	HB 225	Acts of Assembly ✓
Provide that interjurisdictional law-enforcement agreements may allow for the development of co-response teams staffed by one or more law-enforcement agencies that respond to behavioral health-related calls in multiple jurisdictions. (Option 2)	Sen. Perry	SB 317	Acts of Assembly ✓
	Del. Watts	HB 248	Acts of Assembly ✓
Clarify that an individual's information may continue to appear on a voluntary Marcus alert system external database that cannot be modified by a locality after such individual reaches 18 years of age. (Option 5)	Sen. Durant	SB 602	Failed to pass ✗
	Del. Watts	HB 249	Acts of Assembly ✓
Allows DBHDS, in collaboration with DCJS, to amend the written Marcus Alert plan created pursuant to relevant law provided that stakeholders are consulted during the development of any new language and a public comment period of no less than 30 days is held prior to finalization. (Option 6)	Sen. Deeds	SB 513	Acts of Assembly ✓
	Del. Willett	HB 453	Acts of Assembly ✓
Follow up to 2025 recommendation			
Autism Commission			
Replace the Autism Advisory Council with a permanent, staffed Autism Commission.	Sen. Aird	SB 280	Failed to pass from Conference ✗
	Del. Cohen	HB 231	Failed to pass from Conference ✗

OTHER

Recommendation / option	Final status
BHC staff studies	
Implementation and effectiveness of Marcus Alert program	
Amend § 9.1-193 (H) to change the Code reference from “clause (iv) of subdivision B 2 of § 37.2-311.1”, to “clause (vi) of subdivision B 2 of § 37.2-311.1” (typo). (Recommendation 2)	Implemented through Code Commission 