

Behavioral Health Commission- Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 2, 2025 - 2:00 p.m.

General Assembly Building

Members Present

Senator Creigh Deeds, Chair

Senator Lashrecse Aird

Senator Barbara Favola

Senator Russet Perry

Delegate Ellen McLaughlin (virtual)

Delegate Adele McClure

Delegate Chris Obenshain (virtual)

Delegate Vivian Watts

Delegate Rodney Willett (virtual)

Members Absent

Senator Tara Durant

Delegate Carrie Coyner

Delegate Patrick Hope

Call to order and opening remarks- Senator Creigh Deeds, Chair

Executive Director Nathalie Molliet Ribet provided an overview of the agenda and introduced the guest presenters.

Rita Utz, Acting Executive Director, and Erica Bullock, Warm Line Manager from Mental Health Virginia, gave an overview of the non-profit entity's services. They also described the work performed through their Warm Line, who uses it, and how extensively it is used across the state. Lastly, they answered members' questions.

Nathalie Molliet-Ribet explained the process used to select topics for the staff workplan in the upcoming year. Associate Analysts Claire Mairead and John Barfield, and Assistant Analyst Abigail Cornwell summarized the proposed 2026 study and monitoring topics that the Executive Subcommittee recommended. Nathalie summarized the topics that were not recommended but that could be addressed by DMAS and JLARC. Members voted unanimously to approve all the Executive Committee's recommendations.

Claire Mairead presented a member-requested recommendation for the targeted study entitled *Local match of CSB state funding*. After some discussion, members voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation for the 2026 session.

Nathalie Molliet-Ribet began the discussion pertaining to expanding the scope of the BHC beyond improving the behavioral health system, and adding services that support individuals with developmental disabilities. After some discussion, members proposed introducing a bill

and accompanying budget amendment to create a staffed Autism Commission that would build upon the existing Autism Advisory Council. This recommendation is the same as the one adopted by the Commission in 2024. The motion passed with a 6-1 vote.

Meeting adjourned.

Delegate Willett participated virtually due to a medical reason, Delegate McLaughlin participated virtually due to a sick family member, and Delegate Obenshain participated virtually due to undrivable weather conditions.