

Behavioral Health Commission- Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 7, 2025 - 2:00 p.m.

General Assembly Building

Members Present

Senator Creigh Deeds, Chair

Senator Tara Durant

Senator Barbara Favola

Senator Russet Perry

Delegate Carrie Coyner

Delegate Adele McClure

Delegate Chris Obenshain (virtual)

Delegate Vivian Watts

Delegate Rodney Willett

Members Absent

Delegate Ellen Campbell

Delegate Patrick Hope

Senator Lashrecse Aird

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

BHC analyst Abigail Cornwell gave a presentation summarizing the most recent monitoring report on the STEP-VA, entitled *STEP-VA performance monitoring and evaluation*. She briefly discussed the history of the program and the implementation of STEP-VA services since its inception. Abigail described program funding and sources, as well as the impediments created by the current funding structure. Abigail also provided information on the measures developed to assess access to and the quality of the services being provided through STEP-VA. She offered options and recommendations throughout the presentation to help address the challenges identified in the report. Lastly, Abigail answered members' questions.

Executive Director Nathalie Molliet-Ribet gave an introduction summarizing the status of Virginia's crisis services system as it relates to high-acuity individuals and those subject to an involuntary commitment order.

Associate Policy Analyst John Barfield provided a briefing on the final phase of the two-year study entitled *Aligning crisis services and civil commitment process*. John presented some background on the crisis services system in Virginia and the potential benefits it could have on individuals at risk of civil commitment. John also discussed the types of facilities available to provide crisis care in the state and the role they play for individuals in crisis. John offered multiple options and recommendations that could help realize the benefits of a comprehensive crisis system. Lastly, John answered members' questions.

DBHDS Commissioner Nelson Smith made some remarks regarding the two staff presentations. He summarized the investments made in STEP-VA and discussed the improvements that have

been made to the crisis system in Virginia. He also touched on the current deficiencies of the crisis system regarding individuals under an ECO or TDO, and the need to correct them. Lastly, Commissioner Smith discussed awards that DBHDS has received for their data system modernization efforts.

Several individuals offered public comments.

Members discussed the possibility of creating a new commission that would focus on autism spectrum disorders, or adding to the scope of the BHC intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities, including autism. The BHC's charge is currently limited to mental health and substance use disorders. A further discussion of the options will take place during the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Next Commission meeting will be on November 12, 2025.

Delegate Obenshain participated virtually due to a work conflict.