

Behavioral Health Commission- Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 10, 2024 – 2:00 p.m.

New River Valley Community Services

401 West Main Street, Radford, VA 24141

Members Present

Delegate Patrick Hope, Vice Chair

Delegate Carrie Coyner (virtual)

Delegate Ellen Campbell

Delegate Adele McClure (virtual)

Delegate Joseph Obenshain

Delegate Vivian Watts

Delegate Rodney Willett

Senator R. Creigh Deeds, Chair

Senator Lashrecse Aird

Senator Tara Durant (virtual)

Senator Barbara Favola

Senator Russet Perry (virtual)

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

Roll call- Agnes Dymora

Executive Director James Pritchett shared a video highlighting the region and the work of New River Valley Community Services (NRVCS).

James Pritchett was joined by Karen Adams, Senior Director of Regional Crisis Service, and Melanie Adkins, Senior Director of Clinical Services at NRVCS to provide an overview of their programs and patient populations. They discussed the importance of meeting patients where they are and when they are in need, and offered details about crisis services. NRVCS staff also spoke about program successes and the challenges and barriers that remain. Lastly, they answered members' questions.

Commissioner Nelson Smith, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, briefed members on the proposed closure of the Hiram Davis Medical Center (HDMC). He provided a brief history of the center and an overview of the building's deficiencies.

Commissioner Smith presented information about the costs of renovating vs. building a new facility. He described the patient population currently residing at HDMC and provided examples for how to meet these needs in the short and long term when patients are relocated. He also discussed employment options for staff who would be displaced by the closure. Lastly, Commissioner Smith described the process that would be followed to make a final decision on the future of HDMC, and the statutory timeline that must be observed. He answered members' questions throughout.

Dr. Jeffery Aspelmeier and Mr. Bruce Hayden provided an overview of the education and training programs available at Radford University to help build and develop the behavioral health workforce. They described each program and current enrollment. They also discussed their experience with the Higher Education Mental Health Workforce pilot grant, which was funded by the General Assembly. Lastly, they described the challenges with expanding the pipeline of mental health professionals.

Several individuals offered public comments.

Meeting adjourned.

Next Commission meeting will be on October 1, 2024 in the General Assembly Building.

Delegate McClure, Senator Durant, Delegate Coyner, and Senator Perry participated virtually due to a medical reason, a sick family member, medical appointment, and work conflict respectively.