



The Campaign for Children's Mental Health

Child Psychiatric Beds Cannot Be Closed Safely Without System Reform

The Campaign for Children's Mental Health opposes the premature closure of the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents and the adolescent unit of Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute. Those beds cannot be closed safely until alternative treatment options have been developed, a process that is no farther along than it was when the administration first proposed closing these same beds one year ago. Simply put, it is dangerous to deny treatment options to children and adolescents in psychiatric crisis. These beds must remain open to serve the 800-plus young people per year who currently receive treatment there, until alternative community-based treatment options are developed.

Consideration of closing the state facilities should be part of **a larger reform of the children's mental health system in Virginia**. The state's child mental health system is fragmented, underfunded and woefully ineffective. It fails to deliver the services required to help the thousands of children and families in need. To ensure that children with mental health needs can be served effectively, in a timely fashion, in their own communities, Virginia must develop a wider array of community-based treatment options across the spectrum, from prevention and low-intensity services when children first show signs of a disorder, to high-intensity services like inpatient hospitalization, in each region of the state.

The Campaign for Children's Mental Health is prepared to work with both the General Assembly and the McDonnell administration to implement this system-wide reform, including decisions about the state-run psychiatric beds. The Child and Adolescent State and Community Consensus and Planning Team established by 2009 Budget Item 315.BB.2 raised issues that would need to be resolved to make closing state-run beds feasible:

- A wider array of community-based care, including crisis stabilization and other intensive services, must be developed and funded in every region of Virginia to help reduce the need for inpatient care. Funding from closing the hospital beds must be reinvested in new community services.
- The state must work with private providers to develop adequate acute-care psychiatric hospitalization in each region of the state to serve children with the types of needs shown by those currently served by CCCA and SWVMHI, including those children with difficult behaviors and co-occurring conditions who cannot currently be served by the private sector. State government must preserve a safety net to ensure that all children in need of inpatient care can be served.
- Adequate funds must be provided to purchase acute psychiatric care for children without insurance coverage or for those whose coverage has run out.
- In collaboration with the Department of Juvenile Justice, alternative services must be developed to identify and treat those in the juvenile justice system with acute psychiatric needs.

Sponsored by Voices for Virginia's Children

For more information, contact Margaret Nimmo Crowe, Campaign Coordinator, at (804) 649-0184 or margaret@vakids.org.

Budget Amendments

Senate:

Item 309 #2s	Wampler	restores funding for the SWVMHI adolescent unit (\$700,000/\$1.4 mil GF)
Item 309 #3s	Hanger	restores funding for CCCA (\$5 mil/\$8.3 mil GF and \$1.8 mil/\$1.8 mil NGF)
Item 132 #2s	Wampler	restores funding for educational services at SWVMHI (\$567,755/\$580,271 GF)

House:

Item 309 #1h	Bell, R.	restores funding for CCCA (\$5 mil/\$8.3 mil GF and \$1.8 mil/\$1.8 mil NGF)
Item 309 #3h	Carrico	restores funding for the SWVMHI adolescent unit (\$700,000/\$1.4 mil GF)
Item 132 #25h	Bell, R.	restores funding for educational services at CCCA (\$1.3 mil/\$1.3 mil GF)
Item 132 #24h	Carrico	restores funding for educational services SWVMHI (\$567,744/\$580,271 GF)

Organizations Endorsing This Position:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Virginia Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Virginia Chapter
Concern Hotline (Winchester)
FACES of Virginia Families (Foster, Adoption and Kinship Organization)
Families & Allies of Virginia's Youth
Federation of Families, a program of Mental Health America- Virginia
JustChildren, a program of the Legal Aid Justice Center
Legislative Coalition of Virginia Nurses
Medical Home Plus
Mid-Atlantic Juvenile Defender Center
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Virginia
National Association of Social Workers- Virginia Chapter
Northern Virginia Chapter of Washington Psychiatric Society
Psychiatric Society of Virginia
Virginia Association of Community Services Boards
Virginia Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Virginia College of Emergency Physicians
Virginia Counselors Association
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Virginia School Counselors Association
Voices for Virginia's Children