



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL RETARDATION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

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COMMISSIONER

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October 1, 2006

Hon. John H. Chichester
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
P.O. Box 904
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22404-0904

Hon. Vincent H. Callahan, Jr.
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
P.O. Box 1173
McLean, Virginia 22101

Dear Senator Chichester and Delegate Callahan:

Pursuant to Item 311 R of the 2006 Appropriation Act, DMHMRSAS submits the first quarterly report on implementation of the developmental career path program for direct service associates.

Should you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Ms. Neila Gunter, Director of Human Resources, at 786-5859 or via email, neila.gunter@co.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Reinhard".

James S. Reinhard, M.D.
Commissioner
DMHMRSAS

Cc: Hon. William C. Wampler, Jr.
Hon. Phillip A. Hamilton
Ms. Susan Massart
Mr. Joe Flores

REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Implementation of career path for Direct Service Associates
 October 1, 2006

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) has had great difficulty in recruiting and retaining quality direct care personnel. Current rates of staff turnover are significantly higher than the state average and result in excessive overtime costs for our facilities. The General Assembly has approved general funds for 2007 in the amount of \$148,658 and \$811,861 for 2008 to develop and implement a career path program for these valuable employees. The career path program that is being developed will provide training and salary increases to direct care employees who have fulfilled skill and competency requirements and who demonstrate higher-level competencies on the job. This report is an update on the progress of the direct services associates' training and the development of career pathways.

DATA:

Direct Service Associates (August 1, 2006)
 Total: 3,733

Facility Name	Direct Service Associate II	Direct Service Associate III
Catawba Hospital	65	4
Central State Hospital	5	382
Central VA Training Center	766	38
Commonwealth Center for Children & Adolescents	45	18
Eastern State Hospital	290	40
Hiram Davis Medical Center	71	3
Northern VA Mental Health Institute	73.5	1
Northern VA Training Center	232.5	55
Piedmont Geriatric Hospital	87	1
Southeastern VA Training Center	232	5
Southern VA Mental Health Institute	45	
Southside VA Training Center	518	64
Southwestern VA Mental Health Institute	174	16
Southwestern VA Training Center	218	39
Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation		7
Western State Hospital	203	36

PROGRAM INITIATIVE - College of Direct Support Training Program

Training and education programs will utilize distance-learning techniques, such as the interactive web-based training of the College of Direct Support, traditional classroom/experiential training and coursework at local community colleges. This variety of methodologies is being pursued to meet the needs of adult learners and allow operational and organizational flexibility in responding to the specific needs of individuals and organizations, such as amount of time required by individuals, available hours in a day, and the diversified locations of the learners. For example, distance learning techniques allow efficiency and cost savings because learners do not leave the work site and the training is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As of September 12, 2006, the VA DMHMRSAS contract for the College of Direct Support was finalized, committing \$148,658 of the General Fund appropriations for 2007. The contract will begin October 1, 2006, providing 16 State Administrators and access to the 15 modules of the College of Direct Support and 4 Modules in the College of Frontline Supervision. This also includes the on-the-job assessment tools; various survey instruments, and multiple reporting mechanisms.

In consideration of these services, the above appropriation has been expended as follows:

Administrator's Fee: \$44,800 per year (16 site administrators)
 System License Fees: \$103,858

Direct Service Associates Assigned as Learners in the College of Direct Support (CDS)
 As of September 15, 2006

Facility Name	Total Direct Service Associates	Assigned as Learners in CDS
Catawba Hospital	69	4
Central State Hospital	387	182
Central VA Training Center	804	53
Commonwealth Center for Children & Adolescents	63	63
Eastern State Hospital	330	23
Hiram Davis Medical Center	74	0
Northern VA Mental Health Institute	74	68
Northern VA Training Center	287	12
Piedmont Geriatric Hospital	88	88
Southeastern VA Training Center	237	237
Southern VA Mental Health Institute	45	45
Southside VA Training Center	582	49
Southwestern VA Mental Health Institute	190	149
Southwestern VA Training Center	257	257
Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation	7	0
Western State Hospital	239	186
Total	3733	1416

As of September 15, 2006, 1416 Direct Service Associates are participating in the College of Direct Support Internet web-based training. This constitutes 38% of the Direct Service Associates workforce. Currently, there are 2,440 other DMHMRSAS employees participating which includes Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Program Managers, housekeeping and other support staff who are being trained and benefiting from the nationally recognized and validated College of Direct Support curriculum at no extra cost.

PROGRAM INIATIVE - Developmental Career Path for Direct Service Associates' (DSA)

The framework for the developmental path for DSAs is proposed to consist of three (3) levels and will be further developed with specific competency requirements and reward structure by a team consisting of representatives from each of our facilities.

The first level will require:

- The successful completion of the 12 month probationary period (which requires the receipt of a performance evaluation rating of "Contributor" or better);
- The successful completion of all mandatory orientation training; and
- The consistent demonstration of proficiency in all competencies associated with the orientation training, as assessed by supervisors and managers.

Upon successful completion of these three (3) requirements the DSA will receive a salary increase.

The second level will require:

- The completion of a minimum of 24 months of employment;
- The receipt of a performance evaluation rating of "Contributor" or better;
- The absence of active disciplinary notices;
- The successful completion of training and/or education in such competency areas as crisis intervention (identifying possible crises, evaluating situations and determining appropriate interventions, and defusing situations), organizational participation (understands theories/practices and can teach others such things as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation [CPR], behavioral intervention and physical restraint techniques [TOVA], serves as preceptor or mentor), facilitation of services (facilitates the development and implementation of an individualized client plan in conjunction with client and treatment, team taking into consideration client preferences, needs and interests)and assessments (assists in the initiation and conduct of client assessments).
- The consistent demonstration of the level 2 competencies obtained from training and education as assessed by supervisors and managers.

Upon successful completion of these requirements the DSA will receive a salary increase.

The third level will be focused on the development of leadership and/or advanced clinical skills and will require:

- The completion of a minimum of 36 months of employment;
- The receipt of a performance evaluation rating of “Contributor” or better;
- The absence of active disciplinary notices;
- The successful completion of training and/or education in such competency areas as group facilitation and leadership, full supervision of staff, understanding and teaching concepts and theories associated with behavior analysis, and the promotion of teamwork and collaboration.
- The consistent demonstration of the level 3 competencies obtained from training and education as assessed by supervisors and managers.

If funding is available, upon successful completion of these requirements the DSA will receive a base salary increase.