

**REPORT OF THE  
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR  
THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

# **Report on Addressing the Impact of the Aging of the Population**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
2006**



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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RONALD L. LANIER  
DIRECTOR

October 1, 2006

### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine, Governor of Virginia  
Members of the General Assembly

FROM: Ronald L. Lanier, Director

RE: **REPORT ON ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF THE AGING OF THE  
POPULATION PURSUANT TO HOUSE BILL 110 OF THE 2006  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Pursuant to House Bill 110, passed by the Virginia General Assembly in the 2006 Session, the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) submits this report of its progress for addressing the impact of the aging of the population.

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## **Executive Summary**

This document comprises the report of the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) in response to House Bill 110 (2006). The report finds that all of the programs and services of VDDHH are uniformly available to Virginia residents over age 65 and that at least 50% of the recipients in one program, the Technology Assistance Program (TAP), are age 65 or older.

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## REPORT

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House Bill 110 (2006) amended *Code of Virginia* §2.2-5510 to require all agencies to report “its progress for addressing the impact of the aging of the population in at least five specific actions.”

This report responds to guidance from Secretary of Health and Human Resources Marilyn B. Tavenner in a memorandum dated August 25, 2006.

1. *To the extent such data is available, the number of persons who received services from the agency in the past fiscal year who fell into each of the following age ranges: 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If the agency can provide data that compares such numbers to numbers of senior citizens served in the past, please do so. If the agency lacks specific information about the numbers of senior citizens it serves, but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer senior citizens than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.*

Of the programs and services offered by VDDHH, only the Technology Assistance Program (TAP) collects data on the age of program participants. This program provides assistive devices, primarily for telecommunications purposes, to qualified applicants who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired either free or at contract cost. Eligibility is based on verification of disability, income, and residency. There are no age restrictions. Devices available include text telephones (TTYs), large print TTYs, telephone amplifiers, Voice Carry Over Phones, Hearing Carry Over phones, Captioned Telephones, and visual, tactile, and audible signalers. Additional equipment may be available on a case-by-case basis. In Fiscal Year 2006 (FY06), program data show the following breakdown of services:

Ages 65-74: 94 consumers served

Ages 75-84: 119 consumers served

Ages 85+: 177 consumers served.

The total number of individuals receiving equipment from the program in FY06 was 779, which means that fully 50 percent of the individuals served were over age 65. This figure is consistent with program data from Fiscal Year 2003, when 50% of program participants were over age 65. The program did serve 76 more individuals over the age of 65 in FY06 than in FY03, so, while the percentages are the same, the number served has increased.

2. *Identify the agency services that are utilized by senior citizens 65 and older in significant numbers. Indicate whether the agency has the capacity at present to serve all interested seniors or whether the demand for certain services exceeds the agency's capacity. If so, does the agency maintain waiting lists for services?*

VDDHH offers the following programs and services which are likely utilized by senior citizens 65 and older, although specific data on such utilization is not available:

- **Interpreter Services:** VDDHH coordinates sign language interpreter services and Communication Access Real Time Translation (CART – real-time captioning) for state agencies and Virginia Courts. It may be assumed that some percentage of the consumers who use interpreter and CART services coordinated by VDDHH are over the age of 65 but no specific data is available. The agency is able to fill more than 95% of all interpreter and CART requests and there is not waiting list for services.
- **Outreach Services:** Through contracts with service providers across the state, VDDHH provides Outreach Services, including training, technical assistance, and information and referral. Many of these services are targeted to senior citizens although no specific data is available. The contractors have not reported any problems in meeting the demand for services from persons over age 65.
- **Virginia Relay:** VDDHH has oversight for the state’s federally-mandated telecommunications relay service, Virginia Relay. A variety of different types of relay services are available in the Commonwealth, handling more than 1.5 million calls each year. Certainly, senior citizens are a significant percentage of Relay users, either as hearing callers receiving calls from individuals who are deaf, or deaf/late-deafened callers receiving calls from hearing individuals. The demand for services in no way exceeds capacity for this service.
- **Library Services:** VDDHH has a library of specialized materials available for loan to citizens of the Commonwealth. Among the items in our collection are a number of books and videos related to acquired hearing loss, hearing aids and lipreading. These items are frequently used by older Virginians although no specific age-related data is available. The library is currently able to meet the demand although, occasionally, there may be a short wait for an item which is already on loan.

3. *Identify current agency programs, specifically designed to serve seniors 65 and older, that fall into any of the following six categories: Health Care/Wellness; Education; Public Safety; Recreation; Financial Security (including Housing); and Transportation.*

**Health Care/Wellness:** In 2004, all VDDHH Outreach Providers received training from the Virginia Department for the Aging to become part of the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program. With this training, Outreach providers were able to assist a number of deaf, hard of hearing and late-deafened senior citizens prepare for the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program. Through this and other informal initiatives, VDDHH Outreach Providers are encouraged to maintain solid, working relationships with Area Agencies on Aging in their service regions.

Also, the agency has recently added devices to the Technology Assistance Program (TAP) which specifically benefit seniors with hearing loss.

All other agency programs are designed to serve citizens of all ages.

4. *Identify the extent to which your agency provides “consumer-oriented” publications and websites online that are designed to be “senior-friendly.” If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to seniors, identify any steps your agency is taking to improve accessibility.*

The VDDHH website provides links to all agency programs which benefit all citizens, including seniors. In addition, the website provides links to items of particular interest to seniors, such as long-term care information and information on hearing aids. A review of the website in preparation for this report reveals that the agency can be more proactive in providing information of particular interest to seniors and we will be addressing this opportunity in the coming year. In addition, VDDHH is included in the Senior Navigator web-based information system.

5. *Describe any other services or programs that the agency has implemented or plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia’s population.*

VDDHH recognizes that, as the over-65 population grows, so will the number of these individuals who may seek services from this agency. We continue to seek ways through all of our programs to better serve Virginia’s senior citizens.

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## APPENDIX

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### CHAPTER 54

*An Act to amend and reenact § 2.2-5510 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the effect of the aging population on state agencies.*

[H 110]

Approved March 7, 2006

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § [2.2-5510](#) of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ [2.2-5510](#). (Expires July 1, 2008) Strategic plan.

A. Each agency shall develop and maintain a strategic plan for its operations. The plan shall include:

1. A statement of the mission, goals, strategies, and performance measures of the agency that are linked into the performance management system directed by long-term objectives;

2. Identification of priority and other service populations under current law and how those populations are expected to change within the time period of the plan; ~~and~~

3. An analysis of any likely or expected changes in the services provided by the agency; *and*

*4. An analysis of the impact that the aging of the population will have on its ability to deliver services and a description of how the agency is responding to these changes. Based on guidance from the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, each agency shall report by October 1 of each year to the Governor and to the General Assembly its progress for addressing the impact of the aging of the population in at least five specific actions.*

B. Strategic plans shall also include the following information:

1. Input, output, and outcome measures for the agency;

2. A description of the use of current agency resources in meeting current needs and expected future needs, and additional resources that may be necessary to meet future needs; and

3. A description of the activities of the agency that have received either a lesser priority or have been eliminated from the agency's mission or work plan over the previous year because of changing needs, conditions, focus, or mission.



C. The strategic plan shall cover a period of at least two years forward from the fiscal year in which it is submitted and shall be reviewed by the agency annually.

D. Each agency shall post its strategic plan on the Internet.