

**REPORT OF THE
VIRGINIA BOARD FOR PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES**

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

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

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MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Heidi L. Lawyer, 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 Board for People with Disabilities (the Board) submits this report of its progress for addressing the impact of the aging of the population.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Director	i
Executive Summary	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Report	1
Appendix: HB 110 (2006)	5

Executive Summary

This document comprises the report of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) in response to House Bill 110 (2006). While the Board does not operate direct client services, a number of its programs, particularly in the areas of information, outreach, and grant programs have senior citizens as among the beneficiaries.

REPORT

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.*

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (The Board) is a policy and planning entity principally funded under the federal Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. With the exception of the Board’s advocacy & leadership training programs—the Youth Leadership Forum and Partners in Policymaking—and a limited, but rapidly growing, amount of informal information & referral services for individuals with disabilities, their families, and others in the “disability community”, the Board does not provide any direct services. Regarding those direct services:

- The Youth Leadership Forum is specifically directed at rising high school juniors and seniors. It also utilizes some part-time staff and volunteers, but none of them fall within the age ranges listed in your query.
 - Partners in Policymaking participants include both individuals with disabilities and parents of young children with disabilities. Our records show that more than 85% of the PIP participants have been age 49 or younger. We have not had any participants 65 or older. However between 2001-2005, we had 2 participants who were 60; one who was 62 and 15 who were in their 50s.
 - The Board does not collect any demographic information on individuals—“consumers”, advocates, service-providers, policy-makers, etc.—who contact us seeking I&R assistance with disability resources and issues. Some of them are likely age 65 or older or are calling on behalf of someone who is, but we do not have the capacity to collect this data.
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?*

As noted above, the Board does not provide any direct services. Its information and outreach activities are likely utilized by senior citizens 65 or older and its products (such as the Biennial Assessment of the Disability Services System and its quarterly newsletter) may have senior citizens among their audiences. However, specific data on such utilization are not available.

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.*

All of the Board's outreach, research, advocacy, and grant-funding activities are directed primarily at individuals with developmental disabilities as opposed to age-related disabilities because of its federal mandate and funding under the DD Act. Still, these activities provide benefits to the full range of individuals with disabilities and their families, including those ages 65 and older who, because of age-related disabilities, make up a disproportionately large part of the overall population with disabilities. For example, because of its interest in guardianship and human rights issues, the Board works closely with the Virginia Guardianship Association and Virginia Elder Rights Coalition on their annual conference and other areas of common interest, but our efforts are directed at people with disabilities of all ages who require guardianship or rights protection.

Through its competitive and solicited grant programs, the Board funds research, outreach, and demonstration projects. While again, these are targeted to the population of persons with developmental disabilities, persons with developmental disabilities who are aging or persons who are aging and don't have developmental disabilities are likely to benefit. Examples include the Board's Accessible Housing Registry, a grant awarded to the Virginia Housing and Development Authority (VHDA), and now a permanent program of VHDA. Seniors who desire housing that is physically accessible are equally able to utilize this resource. Currently the Board is funding a Transportation and Housing Alliance (THA) project with Thomas Jefferson Planning District that will serve as a conduit of information, resources, technical assistance and education. The THA will make public policy recommendations in the areas of transportation and housing and work to build and improve community infrastructure in localities and statewide. This will benefit persons with disabilities of all ages.

The Board's Consumer Choice in Community Living grant, awarded to the Endependence Center, seeks to identify people with developmental and other disabilities who live in nursing homes and provide information and assistance that enables them to transition into their own homes if they choose to do so. The project will gather information that will be used to inform policy makers of the needs and barriers facing people who want to transition out of nursing homes. While geared to persons with developmental disabilities, the information gathered and the outreach tools will be beneficial to elderly persons seeking transition as well.

The Board's grant award to the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce on Business awareness is educating businesses in the employment of people with disabilities and promoting employment practices which actively recruit and engage workers with disabilities.

The project will deepen the contact pool and exchange between employers, business developers and the disability community for future collaborative efforts. As more and more senior citizens stay in the work force for a longer period of time, these efforts will be of benefit.

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.*

With respect to the Board’s website and publications, as you well know, accessibility by individuals—of all ages, including those over age 65—with disabilities is a major requirement of their design and implementation. To the best of our knowledge, there are no current problems with accessibility, but we constantly strive to improve it—such as recently producing “audio-book” versions of the interim *Biennial Report* and final *Biennial Assessment*. As we constantly broaden our outreach, we are steadily adding more older Virginians, related organizations, and service providers to our outreach efforts and distribution lists. The Board provides links to agency programs which benefit all citizens, including seniors, with prominent links to Senior Navigator and Prescription Drug benefit information.

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.*

The Board recognizes the aging of our population. In its current Strategic Plan, the Board states the following under Anticipated Changes in Agency Customer Base:

“Increase in the average age of the population will result in greater demand for and numbers of consumer and advocacy organizations and state and local service providers as responsibility for services and supports shifts from family members (primary source of support for 88% of people with developmental disabilities in 2002) to community-based, independent-living settings. Family members may no longer be as able to provide supports as they develop age-related disabilities and other limitations on their own activities. People with disabilities are also living longer resulting in increasing numbers at all ages, especially among the adult and elderly populations. This will result in an increase in the number of adult self-advocates and their needs and an increase on health care and other service and support demands over a longer periods of time. (Moving into the Twenty-First Century: A Report to Congress, the President, and the National Council on Disability, Fiscal Years 2001 & 2002, Administration on Developmental Disabilities)”

The Board has just developed and submitted its new 5 year state plan. Activities within address critical issues recently enumerated in the Board’s *Biennial Assessment*, many of which will be influenced by the trends identified in the above quote from the Agency Strategic Plan. While the principal thrust of the Board’s activities will be on behalf of all individuals with disabilities, the growing size and needs of Virginia’s aging population will result in a growing proportional benefit to that population. This trend is already obvious in

the Board’s current activities—such as its Housing and Transportation Alliance grant, sponsorship of the VGA/VERC conference, participation in VDH’s Health Promotions for People with Disabilities’ task force, and consultation on the marketing & promotion of the state’s new CCSS/“No Wrong Door”/EDRC system—which have a large potential impact on the needs of older Virginians with disabilities.

APPENDIX

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.