

Annual Report for the Board of Protection and Advocacy

Author:

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Enabling Authority:

§ 51.5-39.2

Executive Summary:

Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) was created by statute effective July 2002, by §51.5-39.2 of the Code of Virginia. July 2007 marks the fifth year of operation of VOPA and the Board, which governs its operations.

The Board of VOPA, consisting of eleven members, is appointed according to §51.5-39.2 of the Code of Virginia and, as required by statute, met quarterly.

During the last year, the Board has implemented a number of new organizational initiatives, to better carry out its statutory obligations. Most notably, the Board recently established a comprehensive committee system to pair expertise and passion with the requirements of the Board. The Committees, advisory in nature, include Board members, representatives of the disability councils and include staff representation.

With this committee structure providing expertise, substantial talent and resources and another avenue of consumer input, the Board has, among other things:

1. increased the amount and quality of fiscal oversight, including the development of VOPA-specific fiscal procedures;
2. improved the process for receiving and utilizing public input on VOPA's programs and activities;
3. improved the process of developing and reviewing internal operating policies;
4. developed a method for the receipt of public position statements for possible adoption.

Additionally, one of the major activities for the Board each year is the development of goals and priorities. For federal fiscal year 2007, the Board adopted the following goals and focus areas:

FY 2007 GOALS, FOCUS AREAS, AND OBJECTIVES
Effective October 1, 2006 - September 30, 2007

People with Disabilities are Free from Abuse and Neglect

Focus Area #1: Deaths Where There is Probable Cause to Believe Abuse or Neglect Occurred

Focus Area #2: Abuse or Neglect in Community Settings

Focus Area #3: Abuse or Neglect in Institutional Settings

Focus Area #4: Physical Abuse in Juvenile Facilities

Focus Area #5: Shortage of Beds for Psychiatric Patients in Community Settings

Focus Area #6: Lack of Psychiatric Treatment in County and Municipal Jails

Focus Area #7: Completion of Ongoing Work

Children with Disabilities Receive an Appropriate Education

Focus Area #1: Denial of Eligibility Due to Lack of or Inappropriate Evaluations and Assessments

Focus Area #2: Children Who Have Been (or Are at Risk of Being) Suspended Due to Inadequate Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs) or Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs)

Focus Area #3: Assistive Technology in Schools

Focus Area #4: Technical Assistance to Private Bar, Legal Services Agencies, and Parent Advocacy Groups Regarding Changes in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA 2004)

Focus Area #5: Completion of Ongoing Work

People with Disabilities Have Equal Access to Government Services

Focus Area #2: Inaccessible Polling Places for Persons with Disabilities

- Focus Area #3: Services and Supports to Enable Individuals to Move Into the Community**
- Focus Area #4: Appropriate TBI Supports in Education, Employment, and Public Service**
- Focus Area #5: Inaccessibility of Commercial Locations Under Contract with the State**

People with Disabilities Live in the Most Integrated Environment Possible

- Focus Area #1 Service Animals in Public Accommodations**
- Focus Area #2: Appropriate and Timely Discharge Plans at State Mental Health and Mental Retardation Facilities**
- Focus Area #3 Alternative Decision-Making Methods**
- Focus Area #4: Off-Campus Activities for Training Center Residents**
- Focus Area #5: Inaccessibility of Retail Settings**

People with Disabilities are Employed to their Maximum Potential

- Focus Area #1 Vocational Training for Training Center Residents**
- Focus Area #2: Barriers to Work for Social Security Beneficiaries**
- Focus Area #3: Supported Employment**
- Focus Area #4: Maximized Employment for Vocational Rehabilitation Clients**
- Focus Area #5: Employment Information Clinic**

Goal: People with Disabilities Have Equal Access to Appropriate and Necessary Health Care

- Focus Area #1 Assistive Technology through Insurance**
- Focus Area #2: Retention of Benefits through 1619(b) and Medicaid Buy-In**
- Focus Area #3: Medical Care of Residents of Intermediate Care Facilities for People with Mental Retardation (ICFs/MR) and Waiver Homes**

Focus Area #4: Medicaid Appeals for Waiver and EPSDT Issues

Goal: People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia are Aware of VOPA's Services

Focus Area #1 Underserved Communities

Focus Area #2: Client Assistance Program (CAP) at Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Focus Area #3: Outreach to Constituents of the Eastern Shore

Focus Area #4: Spanish-Speaking Constituents

Focus Area #5: Law Enforcement Agencies Recognize the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Focus Area #6: Collaboration with Mental Health Consumer Groups

Focus Area #7: Special Education for Children in Foster Care

Focus Area #8: Employment for Persons with Mental Illness

Focus Area #9: Discharge Rights at Nursing Homes