

## **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. VOPA has been an independent agency with a Governing Board for more than five years.

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 FY 2007, the Governing Board approved finalized procedures for VOPA's fiscal operations and was pleased to see VOPA have a strong positive review by the Auditor of Public Accounts. The governing Board improved its process for evaluating the Executive Director, refined the Director's job description, and developed a succession plan. The Board also reviewed and refined its own operating procedures as well as continuing its review and approval of all agency procedures. Members of the Governing Board receive continuing education throughout the year to enable them to perform their statutory duties, including new member orientation and legal rights training.

Additionally, one of the major activities for the Board each year is the development of goals and priorities. For federal fiscal year 2008, the Board adopted the following goals and focus areas:

### **Goals, Focus Areas, and Objectives October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008**

#### **People with Disabilities are Free from Abuse and Neglect**

1. Deaths where there is probable cause to believe abuse or neglect occurred.
2. Abuse or Neglect in community settings
3. Abuse or Neglect in institutional settings
4. Physical abuse in juvenile facilities.

### **Children with Disabilities Receive an Appropriate Education.**

1. Denial of eligibility due to lack of or inappropriate evaluations and assessments.
2. Children who have been (or are at risk of being) suspended due to inadequate behavioral intervention plans or functional behavioral assessments.
3. Assistive Technology in schools.
4. Children with TBI.
5. Transition from school to work.

### **People with Disabilities have equal access to Government Services.**

1. Services and Supports to Enable individuals to move into the community.
2. Appropriate TBI supports in Government Services and Employment.
3. Services and Supports to Enable individuals to remain in the community.
4. Access to state and local government buildings.
5. Access to Vote for Persons with Disabilities.

### **People with Disabilities Live in the Most Appropriate Integrated Environment.**

1. Appropriate and Timely discharge plans at state mental health and mental retardation facilities.
2. Consumer Driven Alternatives to Guardianship.
3. Off-campus activities for training center residents.
4. Inaccessibility of retail settings.

### **People with Disabilities Are Employed to their Maximum Potential.**

1. Vocational training for training center residents.
2. Barriers to work for social security beneficiaries.
3. Maximized employment for vocational rehabilitation clients.
4. Employment Self-Advocacy Clinic.

**People with Disabilities Have Equal Access to Appropriate and Necessary Health Care.**

1. Assistive technology through insurance.
2. Retention of benefits through 1619(b) and Medicaid Buy-In.
3. Medical Care of Residents of ICF/MRs and Waiver Homes.
4. Medicaid Appeals for EPSDT issues.
5. Medicaid Waiver.