



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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COMMISSIONER

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STATE BOARD OF
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DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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January 1, 2026

TO: The Honorable Glenn Youngkin, Governor of Virginia
and
Members, General Assembly of Virginia

FROM: R. Blake Andis, Chairman, State Board of Behavioral Health and
Developmental Services (Board)

RE: § 37.2-200 of the Code of Virginia

Subsection E of § 37.2-200 of the Code of Virginia requires the chairman of the Board to submit an annual activity report. The language reads:

The chairman of the Board shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the activity and work of the Board no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

In accordance with this statutory directive, please find enclosed the report of the Board's activity for calendar year 2025.

CC: The Honorable Janet V. Kelly, Secretary of Health and Human Resources
Nelson Smith, Commissioner, Department of Behavioral Health and
Developmental Services (DBHDS)



2025 Annual Activity Report of the State Board of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

(§ 37.2-200 of the Code of Virginia)

January 1, 2026

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Preface

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2025 Annual Activity Report of the State Board of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

Table of Contents

Overview

Meetings and Membership 5

Biennium Priorities. 6

Statutory Authority

§ 37.2-203. Powers and duties of Board. 7

§ 37.2-201. Internal evaluation committee of Board 8

§ 37.2-204. Appointments to state and local human rights committees. 8

2025 Activities Summary

Regulatory Adoption 9

Policy Development. 9

Planning 10

Program Oversight 10

Appendix A: 2025 Regulatory Actions 12

Appendix B: Policy Review Schedule 13

Overview

Meetings and Membership

In 2025, the Board met in person, with electronic access available, as follows:

Meeting Date	Location	Locality
April 2, 2025	Western State Hospital	Staunton
July 9, 2025	DBHDS Central Office	Richmond
September 24, 2025	Southeastern Virginia Training Center	Chesapeake
December 10, 2025	DBHDS Central Office	Richmond

The Board also held non-business dinner meetings and program tours with area community services boards in conjunction with the spring and fall meetings in Staunton and Chesapeake, respectively.

Pursuant to § 37.2-200, the Board consists of nine non-legislative citizen members with the following composition:

- Individual who is receiving or who has received services;
- Family member of an individual with lived experience;
- Individual or family member;
- Local government elected official;
- Virginia-licensed psychiatrist; and
- Four citizen members (at-large).

Members are appointed by the governor and subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The current Board membership meets the statutory criteria and is constituted as follows:

Board Member Name	Locality
R. Blake Andis, Chair	Washington County
Jane McDonald, Vice Chair	Stafford County
Sandy Chung, MD	Fairfax County
Caroline Coster, MD	Hanover County
Rebecca Graser	Richmond County
Cindy Lamb	Stafford County
Debbie Marrs	Bedford County
Nina Schroder	Richmond City
Anthony Vadella	Chesterfield County

Board terms are for four years each, except appointments to fill vacancies. Members may be reappointed; however, no member may serve more than two full four-year terms.

The remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's eligibility for reappointment. No member shall serve more than a total of 12 years.

Biennium Priorities

At its biennial planning meeting in July, the Board reviewed DBHDS's progress on budgetary and strategic initiatives. Guided by the transformational impact of Virginia's historic investments and systemic improvements in recent years, particularly through *Right Help, Right Now*, Board members developed recommendations in five policy areas for the 2026-28 biennium.

Above all, the Board strongly supported maintaining Virginia's commitment to the behavioral health and developmental services system transformation. Urging strategic continuity in the upcoming biennium – with special emphasis on crisis care, community supports, competency restoration, and the youth continuum – the Board endorsed:

1. Expanding system capacity, building on workforce sustainability investments, and increasing community-based services including support for Virginians with substance use disorders.
2. Reducing overreliance on law enforcement, especially through utilization of crisis care, and decreasing the “criminalization” of behavioral health conditions.
 - Increase the use of special conservators of the peace (or SCOPs) for alternative custody and transportation.
 - Advance technologies that help crisis workers access and share information for more effective triage.
3. Financing waiver services and sustaining provider rates to ensure the availability and long-term success of integrated community settings for Virginians with developmental disabilities and their families.
4. Accelerating expansion of the community-based crisis continuum, which has shown the greatest impact on delivering effective treatment to the Commonwealth's most vulnerable populations.
 - Provide additional support to build out the elements of the MARCUS Alert system that have proven to be effective, most notably crisis co-response teams and enhanced communication protocols, and other immediate crisis services (CITAC, CRCs, etc.).
 - Review and consider repealing or amending the Bed of Last Resort law to correct significant unintended consequences that overburden the state hospital system, law enforcement, community services boards, and many other system partners.
5. Prioritizing a comprehensive system of care to identify and meet the needs of Virginia's infants, children, adolescents, and young adults as early as possible.
 - Maintain support for Early Intervention, school-based, and other youth services.
 - Promote the Virginia Mental Health Access Program (VMAP) and other training resources for child-serving providers to serve behavioral health concerns.
 - Incentivize private sector partners to increase access to mental health support services for children from birth to transition age.

Statutory Authority

Section 37.2-200 of the Code of Virginia establishes the Board as an executive branch policy board, as defined in § 2.2-2100.

§ 37.2-203. Powers and duties of Board.

The Board shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To develop and establish programmatic and fiscal policies governing the operation of state hospitals, training centers, community services boards, and behavioral health authorities;
2. To ensure the development of long-range programs and plans for mental health, developmental, and substance abuse services provided by the Department, community services boards, and behavioral health authorities;
3. To review and comment on all budgets and requests for appropriations for the Department prior to their submission to the Governor and on all applications for federal funds;
4. To monitor the activities of the Department and its effectiveness in implementing the policies of the Board;
5. To advise the Governor, Commissioner, and General Assembly on matters relating to mental health, developmental, and substance abuse services;
6. To adopt regulations that may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this title and other laws of the Commonwealth administered by the Commissioner or the Department;
7. To ensure the development of programs to educate citizens about and elicit public support for the activities of the Department, community services boards, and behavioral health authorities;
8. To ensure that the Department assumes the responsibility for providing for education and training of school-age individuals receiving services in state facilities, pursuant to § 37.2-312;
9. To change the names of state facilities;
10. To adopt regulations that establish the qualifications, education, and experience for registration of peer recovery specialists by the Board of Counseling.
11. To ensure that the Department develops specific goals and objectives for the delivery of services to individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities, or substance use disorders by community services boards and behavioral health authorities that are consistent with the purposes set forth in §§ 37.2-508 and 37.2-608 and that would enable the Board to advise the Governor, Commissioner, and General Assembly on matters related to community behavioral health and developmental services; and
12. To monitor the Department's performance regarding its regular, ongoing monitoring of community services boards' and behavioral health authorities' compliance with the

performance contract requirements set forth in §§ 37.2-508 and 37.2-608 and to make recommendations, as applicable, to the Department regarding improvement of such monitoring activities.

§ 37.2-201. Internal evaluation committee of Board.

The Board shall appoint an internal evaluation committee to be composed of at least three members of the Board who shall review and evaluate the effects of designated policies of the Board and the performance of the Department, state facilities, community services boards, and behavioral health authorities in carrying out those policies. The committee and any staff designated by the Commissioner shall have access to all records of the Department, state facilities, community services boards, and behavioral health authorities in carrying out these monitoring activities. The committee shall report its findings to the Board, which shall take action thereon as it deems appropriate.

§ 37.2-204. Appointments to state and local human rights committees.

The Board **shall appoint a state human rights committee** that shall appoint local human rights committees to address alleged violations of human rights of individuals receiving services. One-third of the appointments made to the state or local human rights committees shall be individuals who are receiving or who have received services or family members of such individuals, with at least two individuals who are receiving or who have received public or private mental health, developmental, or substance abuse treatment or habilitation services within five years of the date of their initial appointment on each committee. In addition, at least one appointment to the state and each local human rights committee shall be a health care provider. Remaining appointments shall include lawyers and persons with interest, knowledge, or training in the mental health, developmental, or substance abuse services field. No current employee of the Department, a community services board, or a behavioral health authority shall serve as a member of the state human rights committee. No current employee of the Department, a community services board, a behavioral health authority, or any facility, program, or organization licensed or funded by the Department or funded by a community services board or behavioral health authority shall serve as a member of any local human rights committee that serves an oversight function for the employing facility, program, or organization.

2025 Activities Summary

Regulatory Adoption

Applicable Statutory Authority	
Adopt regulations that may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this title and other laws of the Commonwealth administered by the Commissioner or the Department	§ 37.2-203 (6)
Adopt regulations that establish the qualifications, education, and experience for registration of peer recovery specialists by the Board of Counseling	§ 37.2-203 (10)

In 2025, the Board completed three Periodic Reviews, initiated two standard Notices of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRAs); and authorized two Emergency/NOIRA, five Fast-Track, and two Exempt actions.

Additionally, five Fast-Track actions filed prior to 2025 became effective this year (*refer to Appendix A*).

Policy Development

Applicable Statutory Authority	
Develop and establish programmatic and fiscal policies governing the operation of state hospitals, training centers, community services boards, and behavioral health authorities	§ 37.2-203 (1)
Monitor the activities of the Department and its effectiveness in implementing the policies of the Board	§ 37.2-203 (4)
Change the names of state facilities	§ 37.2-203 (9)

The Board's Policy Development and Evaluation Committee drafts and revises policies, coordinates field reviews, and assesses the effectiveness of implementation in accordance with the Policy Review Schedule (*refer to Appendix B*).

In 2025, the Policy Development and Evaluation Committee completed periodic review of the following policies without revisions:

- Policy 1028 (SYS) 90-1 Human Resource Development;
- Policy 2010 (ADM) 88-2 Policy Development and Education; and
- Policy 1034 (SYS) 05-1 Partnership Agreement.

The Policy Development and Evaluation Committee reviewed and continues to revise the following policies:

- Policy 6005 (FIN) 94-2: Retention of Unspent State Funds by Community Services Boards;
- Policy 3000 (CO) 74-10: Appointments of Department Employees to Community Services Boards; and
- Policy 2011 (ADM) 88-3: Naming of Buildings, Rooms, and Other Areas at State Facilities.

Finally, the full Board revised the following policies as recommended by the committee:

- Policy 4018 (CSB) 86-9 Community Services Board Performance Contracts;
- Policy 5008 (FAC) 87-12 Accreditation/Certification;

- Policy 5010 (FAC) 00-1 State Facility Uniform Clinical and Operational Policies and Procedures; and
- Policy 5006 (FAC) 86-29 Razing of Dilapidated Buildings.

Board policies are maintained online at <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/about-dbhds/Boards-Councils/state-board-of-BHDS/bhds-policies/>.

Planning

Applicable Statutory Authority	
Ensure the development of long-range programs and plans for mental health, developmental, and substance abuse services provided by the Department, community services boards, and behavioral health authorities	§ 37.2-203 (2)
Review and comment on all budgets and requests for appropriations for the Department prior to their submission to the Governor and on all applications for federal funds	§ 37.2-203 (3)
Advise the Governor, Commissioner, and General Assembly on matters relating to mental health, developmental, and substance abuse services	§ 37.2-203 (5)
Ensure that the Department develops specific goals and objectives for the delivery of services to individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities, or substance use disorders by community services boards and behavioral health authorities that are consistent with the purposes set forth in §§ 37.2-508 and 37.2-608 and that would enable the Board to advise the Governor, Commissioner, and General Assembly on matters related to community behavioral health and developmental services	§ 37.2-204

Article VII, Section 1.2 of the Board's bylaws directs the Planning and Budget Committee to participate in the identification of services and support needs, critical issues, strategic responses, and resource requirements to be included in long-range plans; work with the Department to obtain, review, and respond to public comments on draft plans; and monitor Department progress in implementing long-range programs and plans.

At its biennial planning meeting in July, after reviewing DBHDS's progress on budgetary and strategic initiatives, Board members adopted priorities in five policy areas for the 2026-28 biennium (*refer to Overview section*).

Program Oversight

Applicable Statutory Responsibility	
Ensure the development of programs to educate citizens about and elicit public support for the activities of the Department, community services boards, and behavioral health authorities	§ 37.2-203 (7)
Ensure that the Department assumes the responsibility for providing for education and training of school-age individuals receiving services in state facilities, pursuant to § 37.2-312	§ 37.2-203 (8)
Monitor the Department's performance regarding its regular, ongoing monitoring of community services boards' and behavioral health authorities' compliance with the performance contract requirements set forth in §§ 37.2-508 and 37.2-608 and to make recommendations, as applicable, to the Department regarding improvement of such monitoring activities.	§ 37.2-203 (12)
Appoint a state human rights committee that shall appoint local human rights committees to address alleged violations of human rights of individuals receiving services.	§ 37.2-203 (12)

In 2025, the Board received regular reports on major initiatives and system funding issues at its quarterly meetings. Subject matter experts presented on topics covering:

- *Right Help, Right Now*, including updates on mobile crisis response, 988 call centers, alternative transportation, and Special Conservators of the Peace (SCOPs);
- DBHDS strategic planning and data modernization initiatives;
- Facilities planning, notably construction at Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute and recommended closure of Hiram Davis Medical Center;
- Activity and performance of community services boards and the Office of Human Rights;
- Substance use disorder efforts, including internal agency restructuring to integrate and elevate recovery and prevention within the behavioral health division;
- Replacement of the U.S. Department of Justice Settlement Agreement with the Permanent Injunction;
- Medicaid behavioral health services redesign; and
- Legislative and budgetary impacts from the 2025 Session of the General Assembly, as well as federal issues affecting system funding and grants.

In addition, the Board appointed three members to the State Human Rights Committee: Bruce Ellsworth, Kimberly Hunt, and Mary “Betsy” Lang.

Appendix A: 2025 Regulatory Actions

VAC CITATION	CHAPTER TITLE	ACTION	LATEST STAGE	STATUS
12VAC35-12	Public Participation Guidelines	Periodic review	Retain as is	Periodic Review completed 6/25/2025
12VAC35-46	Children's Residential Facilities	Non-controversial regulatory reductions per ED 1	Fast-Track	Effective 6/19/2025
		Alignment with VDH regulations	Fast-Track	Board adopted 4/02/2025; at OAG
12VAC35-105	Regulations for Licensed Providers	QMHP and QMHP-T designations	Exempt	Effective 6/18/2025
		Non-controversial regulatory reductions per ED 1	Fast-Track	Effective 6/19/2025
		Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)	Fast-Track	Effective 12/01/2025
		Alignment with VDH regulations	Fast-Track	Board adopted 4/02/2025; at OAG
		Regulatory Restructuring	Proposed	NOIRA completed 9/24/2025
		Crisis services technical and clarifying amendments	Fast-Track	Board adopted 7/09/2025; at OAG
		Medicaid behavioral health redesign: new CPST service	Emergency/NOIRA	Board adopted 9/24/2025; at OAG
		Valid discharge plans	Fast-Track	Board adopted 9/24/2025; at HHR
		Reporting prior negative actions	Fast-Track	Board adopted 7/09/2025; at HHR
12VAC35-115	Human Rights Regulations	Updates following periodic review; conform to HCDA	NOIRA	Board adopted 4/02/2025; at HHR
12VAC35-210	Temporary Leave from State Facilities	Periodic review	Retain as is	Periodic Review completed 6/25/2025
12VAC35-225	Early Intervention System (Part C)	Adding eligible professions	Fast-Track	Effective 9/25/2025
12VAC35-240	Victims of Sterilization Fund Program	Periodic review	Retain as is	Periodic Review completed 6/26/2025
12VAC35-250	Peer Recovery Specialists	PRS-T (trainee) designation	Emergency/NOIRA	Board adopted 9/24/2025; at OAG
12VAC35-260	Certified Recovery Residences	Reporting deaths or serious injuries	Fast-Track	Effective 10/09/2025
		Mandatory conditional certification	Exempt	Effective 1/14/2026

Appendix B: Policy Review Schedule

CATEGORY	POLICY NUMBER	POLICY TITLE	LAST REVIEW DATE (MO-YR)	NEXT REVIEW DUE (MO-YR)
#2000 (ADM ST BD) – ADMINISTRATION	2010(ADM)88-2	Policy Development and Education	Jul-21	Jul-25
#2000 (ADM ST BD) – ADMINISTRATION	2011(ADM)88-3	Naming of Buildings, Rooms and Other Areas at State Facilities	Jul-21	Jul-25
#3000 (CO) – CENTRAL OFFICE	3000(CO)74-10	Department Employee Appointments to Community Services Boards	Jul-21	Sep-25
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1034(SYS)05-1	Partnership Agreement	Dec-21	Sep-25
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1030(SYS)90-3	Consistent Collection and Utilization of Data in State Facilities and Community Services Boards	Dec-21	Apr-26
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1040(SYS)06-3	Consumer and Family Member Involvement and Participation	Jul-22	Apr-26
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1016(SYS)86-23	Policy Goal of the Commonwealth for a Comprehensive, Community-Based System of Services		Sep-26
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1038(SYS)06-1	The Safety Net of Public Services		Sep-26
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1021(SYS)87-9	Core Services		Dec-26
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1039(SYS)06-2	Availability of Minimum Core Services		Dec-26
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1035(SYS)05-2	Single Point of Entry and Case Management Services		Apr-27
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1042(SYS)07-1	Primary Health Care		Jul-27
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1008(SYS)86-3	Services for Older Adults with Mental Health or Substance Use Disorders, Intellectual Disability, or Co-Occurring Disorders	Jul-22	Dec-27

#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1041(SYS)06-4	Services for Individuals with Mental Health or Substance Use Disorders, Intellectual Disability, or Co-occurring Disorders Who are at Imminent Risk of Becoming Involved with the Criminal Justice System	Oct-22	Apr-28
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1015(SYS)86-22	Services for Individuals with Co-occurring Disorders	Sep-23	Jul-28
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1036(SYS)05-3	Vision Statement	Dec-23	Jul-28
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1044(SYS)12-1	Employment First	Jul-22	Sep-28
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1004(SYS)83-7	Prevention Services	Sep-23	Sep-28
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1023(SYS)89-1	Workforce Cultural and Linguistic Competency	Apr-23	Dec-28
#4000 (CSB) – COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARDS/ COMMUNITY PROGRAMS	4023(CSB)86-24	Housing Supports	Apr-24	Apr-29
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1007(SYS)86-2	Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for Children and Adolescents and Their Families	Apr-24	Apr-29
#4000 (CSB) --- COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARDS/ COMMUNITY PROGRAMS	4038(CSB)94-1	Department and CSB Roles in Providing Services to Children Under the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families	Apr-24	Jul-29
#5000 (FAC) – STATE FACILITIES	5010(FAC)00-1	State Facility Uniform Clinical and Operational Policies and Procedures	Dec-24	Jul-29
#5000 (FAC) – STATE FACILITIES	5008(FAC)87-12	Accreditation/Certification	Dec-24	Sep-29
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1043(SYS)08-1	Disaster Preparedness	Apr-23	Sep-29
#5000 (FAC) – STATE FACILITIES	5006(FAC)86-29	Razing of Dilapidated Buildings	Oct-24	Dec-29

#4000 (CSB) – COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARDS/ COMMUNITY PROGRAMS	4018(CSB)86-9	Community Services Board Performance Contracts	Apr-25	Apr-29
#4000 (CSB) – COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARDS/ COMMUNITY PROGRAMS	4010(CSB)83-6	Local Match Requirements for Community Services Boards	Oct-24	Jul-29
#6000 (FIN) – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	6005(FIN)94-2	Retention of Unspent State Funds by Community Services Boards	Apr-25	Dec-29
#2000 (ADM ST BD) – ADMINISTRATION	2010 (ADM ST BD) 10-1	Review and Comment on BHDS Budget Priorities	Oct-24	Apr-30
#1000 (SYS) – SYSTEM MISSION AND DIRECTION	1028(SYS)90-1	Human Resource Development	Apr-25	Apr-30