



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of July 19, 2008**

DATE: July 11, 2008

SUBJECT: Appropriation of New State Funds and Authorization of New State-Funded Positions for Department of Human Services.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

1. Appropriate \$270,718 in FY 2009 from the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) (101.364501) to the Department of Human Services (DHS) (101.52101) for new positions to support post-Virginia Tech tragedy changes in Virginia law related to mandated mental health emergency services, outpatient therapy and case management.
2. Appropriate \$70,000 in FY 2009 from DMHMRSAS (101.364501) to DHS (101.56002) for a new Child and Adolescent Mental Health Therapist.
3. Authorize 5.2 FTE permanent grant-funded positions in DHS to provide mental health case management, outpatient and emergency services as prescribed by changes in Virginia law related to mental health law reform and to provide additional specialized mental health services for at-risk children.
4. Appropriate \$64,398 in FY 2009 from DMHMRSAS (101.364601) to DHS (101.52210) to provide substance abuse treatment and education for HIV prevention. These funds will be used to support personnel and substance abuse residential treatment costs for methadone treatment.
5. Authorize 0.5 FTE permanent grant-funded position in DHS (101.52202) to provide substance abuse treatment and education for HIV prevention.

ISSUES: If authorized, new state funds in the amount of \$405,116 will be accepted and appropriated for specified activities and 5.7 new grant-funded FTEs will be authorized to fulfill the requirements of the new funds and changes in the Code of Virginia.

County Manager: _____

Staff: Michael R. Peter, DHS, Behavioral Healthcare Division

SUMMARY: DHS has received notification of new and continuing state funding through the state mental health law reform initiative undertaken as a result of the Virginia Tech tragedy. This is an FY 2009 funding increase allocated throughout the Commonwealth for mental health services to address the critical shortage of these services identified across the state. This new funding must be used for these expressed purposes and cannot be used to offset or supplant local or other funding sources.

DHS has also received notification of new and continuing state funding to increase the availability of mental health services for children in the Arlington service area. In addition, DHS has received new funds through DMHMRSAS to replace the loss of federal HIV prevention support. DMHMRSAS has stipulated that the HIV prevention services be provided by an FTE rather than contracted services. Staff recommends using the funds for 5.7 FTEs to carry out the expressed purposes of the state funding.

BACKGROUND: Since the tragedy at Virginia Tech in April 2007, mental health services in Virginia have come under intense scrutiny. Several key committees and commissions at the state level, including the Supreme Court's Mental Health Law Reform Commission, the Virginia Tech Panel, and the Health, Welfare and Institutions Committee, have focused on reviewing existing services. Feedback from these committees and from the public and private sectors acknowledges that there are areas of Virginia's mental health system in need of reform and increased resources.

The recommendations of the Governor's Commission on Mental Health Law Reform resulted in new FY 2009 funding of \$28,306,164 to Community Services Boards in the Commonwealth to "provide emergency services, crisis stabilization services, case management, and inpatient and outpatient mental health services for individuals who are in need of emergency mental health services or who meet criteria for mental health treatment." Funding is to be distributed based on populations of jurisdictions across the Commonwealth. Arlington is classified by the state as medium-large and will receive \$270,718 in FY 2009 and \$331,492 in FY 2010.

From the same state recommendations and reviews, an additional \$2,800,000 was appropriated for FY 2009 to allow each jurisdiction \$70,000 (to be increased to \$75,000 in FY 2010 and beyond) to increase the capacity to provide mental health treatment to children and adolescents.

In addition, as of FY 2009, Virginia is no longer a state designated for federal HIV funding from the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. While Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics show that the statewide HIV incidence rate has fallen below the threshold for federal funding, Arlington's incidence rate is still well above the federal baseline. In an effort to continue this vital service with new grant funding, DHS and DMHMRSAS staff have agreed to a compromise that would reallocate state funds for this purpose with the expressed condition that the support be used for FTE-provided services rather than contracted services.

DISCUSSION: DHS has conducted reviews of the affected programs and determined how to allocate new funding to meet the requirements in Chapter 8 of Title 37.2 of the *Code of Virginia*. In order to meet new state requirements, DHS recommended the addition of 5.2 FTEs to decrease overall caseloads and increase the availability of services. The funding is intended specifically to address changes in Chapter 8 of Title 37.2 of the *Code of Virginia* related to the civil involuntary commitment process, mandated changes in emergency services and mandatory and non-mandatory mental health outpatient services. This new funding must be used for these expressed purposes and cannot be used to offset or supplant local or other funding sources.

DHS has also received notification of new and continuing state funding to increase the availability of mental health services for children in the Arlington service area. The ongoing state appropriation specifies that the Child and Family Mental Health Unit cooperate with Court Services Units to provide services to children who have been brought before Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. The funding is for mental health treatment services to reduce the risk these children pose to themselves and their communities.

In addition, DHS has received additional funds through DMHMRSAS to replace the loss of federal HIV prevention support. The federal funds were eliminated in Virginia based on a formula used to show that the incidence of new HIV infection in the Commonwealth was down significantly. Arlington's HIV incidence rate is above the state average. Reallocated state funding of \$64,398 will be used to fund a 0.5 FTE and to continue supporting methadone treatment for Arlington clients. This 0.5 FTE will provide substance abuse treatment and education for HIV prevention. DMHMRSAS has increased unrestricted federal substance abuse support to offset the reallocated state funding.

With the appropriation of these new state funds and the authorization of these state-funded FTEs, Arlington will be able to effectively expand support to Arlington consumers in need of mental health services. These new FTEs will ensure that additional resources are available for children and adults who need them most and to address the changes in Virginia law.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no impact on net tax support in FY 2009. The new state appropriation will fully fund the cost of 5.2 FTEs. At this time, funding is expected to be fixed at the FY 2010 level and the state will provide minimal cost of living increases that would not necessarily keep pace with increasing personnel costs. As a result, funds may be needed in the future for increased costs, or services may be reduced. For the new 0.5 grant-funded FTE related to HIV education, the reallocated state funds are expected to support personnel and associated costs with no annual increases expected beyond FY 2009. There is no impact to the budget in FY 2009.