

Testimony of Suzette Kern, Chairman
Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
Before the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees
of the Virginia General Assembly
January 3, 2018

Good morning. I am Suzette Kern, chairman of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. We are the largest CSB in Virginia, serving a population of over 1.1 million people in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

Our three most pressing concerns this year are these:

First: We need **full state funding to implement “STEP – VA”**, the transformation plan for the Commonwealth’s behavioral health system.

STEP-VA requires that by July 1, **2019**, all CSBs provide **same-day access to mental health screening services**. Also by that date, CSBs must provide **primary healthcare screening and follow-up** for people who need help accessing services.

Then, by July 1, **2021**, CSBs are mandated to provide more services, including crisis and outpatient, case management, peer and family support, and more.

We support these goals, and we provide some of these services already. But for us to **fully** implement STEP-VA, we must have sufficient state funding, commensurate with the size of the population we serve. Otherwise, we will have to cut back in other areas that are just as critical, but not mandated.

Second: We need state funding to fight the **opioid epidemic**.

Fairfax County police reported **six overdose-related deaths in just one week** in December 2017 – five of the six deaths involved opioids. In 2016, opioid overdose claimed the lives of more than 1,100 Virginians – and more than 100 of those deaths were in Fairfax County.

As fatalities increase, demand for CSB services continues to grow. We provide some interim support for people as they wait for services to become available.

But **substance use disorder is a life-threatening condition**. For some people, the wait is insupportable.

CSBs are on the front lines, saving lives. We need more money for detoxification, medication-assisted treatment and other services to fight this terrible epidemic.

Third: **We need more funding for community-based services for people with developmental disabilities.** We need housing and support options, especially in Fairfax County where real estate and service delivery costs are high, and Medicaid waiver reimbursement rates are insufficient. More than 2,000 Fairfax County residents are waiting for Medicaid waivers.

More state funding is essential to create a truly viable community-based service system for Virginians with developmental disabilities.

My handouts provide more information. Thank you for your support.

Testimony of Bettina Lawton
Vice-Chair, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
Before the Fairfax County Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly
January 6, 2018

Hello, I am Bettina Lawton, Vice-Chair of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. In the past fiscal year, our CSB provided mental health, substance use disorder and developmental disabilities services to over 23,000 people of all ages in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

I am here today with two of my CSB Board colleagues to bring to your attention our most urgent priorities for this year's legislative session.

Our first priority is full funding to implement "STEP – VA", the Commonwealth's transformation plan for the statewide behavioral health system.

STEP-VA requires that by July 1, 2019, all CSBs provide same-day access to mental health screening and evaluation services. Also by that date, CSBs must provide primary healthcare screening and follow-up for people we serve who need help accessing services.

Then, by July 1, 2021, CSBs are mandated to provide more services, including crisis and outpatient treatment, case management, peer and family support, and more.

We fully support these goals; in fact, we provide some of these services – such as same day access to mental health screening – already. But for us to **fully** implement STEP-VA, we must have sufficient state funding, commensurate with the size of the population we serve of over 1.1 million people.

Without sufficient state funding for these newly mandated services, we will have to cut back other services that are also critically important.

We were encouraged to see that Governor McAuliffe's proposed biennial budget for 2019-2020 includes \$11.8 million for the 22 CSBs, including ours, that have not yet received funds to implement same-day access. We were also encouraged by the inclusion of \$11.2 million to implement Primary Care Screening services.

These two measures may not sound dramatic, but they can save lives. When someone with a mental health condition or substance use disorder comes to us for help, we need to be able to evaluate their need the same day they come in. Otherwise, especially with someone in a fragile state, the brief opportunity to help them can be lost.

The second issue is also important – providing primary care screening and follow-up for behavioral health clients. Such simple screening, especially for people who have no other primary health care, can detect potentially life-threatening medical conditions, which frequently threaten their behavioral health recovery. People with mental illness and substance use disorders often lack access to primary health care. They die, on average, 25 to 30 years earlier than the rest of the U.S. population. Our local client mortality data mirror these grim national statistics. Most often these early deaths are caused by preventable, treatable diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

To improve the overall health and well-being of people we serve, it is crucial that we integrate primary and behavioral healthcare services. State funding for primary care screening helps us do this. We ask that you support these and other provisions in the Governor's budget proposal to implement STEP-VA, combat the opioid epidemic, and strengthen our Commonwealth's behavioral health system.

Our handouts provide additional information about these and other issues that my colleagues will talk about next. Thank you, as always, for your support.

Testimony of Jennifer Adeli

Jennifer Adeli, Board Member, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

Before the Fairfax Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly

January 6, 2018

I am *Jennifer Adeli, Dranesville District* representative to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.

In FY 2017, our CSB provided community-based services and supports to over 3,300 people with developmental disabilities. Our support coordination, residential, and employment and day services help people with disabilities live, work and thrive in the community.

It has been five years since Virginia and the U.S. Department of Justice reached an agreement to move Virginia from an institution-based system to a community-based system of services for people with developmental disabilities. But Virginia has not yet provided sufficient funding to make this transition successful.

Virginia's redesigned Medicaid waivers only partially address the problem. Reimbursement rates continue to be well below the cost of providing services in Northern Virginia. For people who are medically very fragile, this disparity between waiver reimbursement rates and actual cost of needed services is even more pronounced.

We need housing and support options, especially in Fairfax County where real estate and service delivery costs are high, and Medicaid waiver reimbursement rates are insufficient. Other parts of Virginia have received state funding for some limited expansion of residential supports, but the Commonwealth has failed so far to create such housing and support options in Northern Virginia.

The waiting list continues to grow of people who qualify for and need Medicaid waivers to help pay for their community-based services. More than 2,000 Fairfax County residents are among the 12,000 Virginians waiting for Medicaid waivers. Although the Commonwealth has released more waivers in recent years, it has not kept up with demand. This is an untenable situation.

More state funding is essential to implement the federal settlement agreement and create a **truly** viable community-based service system for Virginians with developmental disabilities.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Testimony of Diane Tuininga
Member, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
Before the Fairfax County Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly
January 6, 2018

Good morning. I am Diane Tuininga, City of Fairfax representative on the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.

An epidemic of opioid addiction is claiming lives throughout our country and our community. Fairfax County police reported **six overdose-related deaths in just one week** in December 2017 – five of the six deaths involved opioids. In 2016, more than 100 Fairfax County residents died from an overdose.

Our CSB is on the front lines in this battle. In the past two years, we have trained over 1,000 people in our community to administer naloxone, a medication that reverses opioid overdose symptoms. In FY 2017, our CSB provided substance use disorder services to over 1,600 individuals.

The 2017 General Assembly approved legislation to help reduce the available supply of opioids by strengthening prescription monitoring and limiting prescriptions to what is medically necessary. But **much more is required to confront this public health emergency.**

Solutions like **medication-assisted treatment** remain grossly underfunded. This involves providing medications to help people remain opioid free, combined with nursing services, community case management, and in-home supports. We can only partially meet the community need for this effective, evidence-based treatment; much more state funding is urgently needed.

Increasingly powerful and deadly drugs are appearing in our region. As overdose fatalities increase, service demand increases. People with substance use disorders who want to stop using must wait – sometimes weeks - before they can access our medical detox services due to resource constraints. The wait is even longer for people seeking long-term residential treatment. Our CSB provides some interim support for people as they wait. But **substance use disorder is a life-threatening condition.** For some people, the wait is unbearable. The Commonwealth must provide more funding for detoxification, medication-assisted treatment, and other services -- including substance abuse prevention programs -- that are cost-efficient, accessible, and outcome driven. We are encouraged to see that Governor McAuliffe's proposed budget for 2019-2020 includes funding for medication-assisted treatment and other measures to address this continuing crisis, which impacts us all.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns. We are very grateful for your support.