

Testimony of Bettina Lawton to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
On behalf of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
FY 2021 County Budget Public Hearing
April 30, 2020

Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the Board. My name is Bettina Lawton, and I am chair of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. Thank you for the opportunity to share the CSB's ongoing budget priorities as the county works to address the financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last year, the CSB provided services to over 21,000 individuals with challenges relating to mental health, substance use disorder and developmental disabilities. This Board's support and understanding of the critical services we provide to the most vulnerable in our community is what makes this level of service possible. The CSB is not immune to the economic impacts of the pandemic. While federal funds are being made available to the county through the federal CARES Act, these dollars cannot be used to make up for CSB's lost Medicaid or Medicare revenue. We request flexibility with any one-time funds made available to the CSB to allow dollars to be used to make up for these significant revenue shortfalls.

The CSB Board understands the budgetary challenges caused by the COVID-19 crisis. However, investment in services to expand Diversion First, funds to combat the opioid epidemic, and new positions for developmental disability services remain important priorities. Additionally, the CSB is committed to strengthening our healthcare business operations. CSB is focused on maximizing revenue recovery, but staff still face the challenge of navigating the requirements of six separate managed care organizations to provide and bill for services. The CBS Board was supportive of additional positions for our healthcare business operations team in the FY 2021 Advertised Budget. We hope future county investments will help us meet the critical goal of strengthening our healthcare business operations to maximize revenue recovery.

We greatly appreciate this Board's historical support for local investments in critical CSB services. As we move into this next fiscal year, we want to share our concerns about some state-level funding decisions, concerns which will become even more significant as the state deals with the financial impact of the pandemic. It is critically important to continue encouraging the Virginia General Assembly and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to provide adequate funding to our CSB. We will keep the Board apprised of the following three fiscal challenges.

First, the state base budget general fund reduction to CSBs. After Medicaid expansion, state general fund dollars to CSBs were cut with the expectation that CSBs could replace these dollars with Medicaid reimbursements. CSBs are not able to make up for these reductions. Last year,

the General Assembly acted by allocating \$7 million in restoration money to the CSBs, including \$1 million to our CSB. However, no such funding was included in any version of this year's state biennium budget, and our CSB faces a \$4.3 million cut in state fiscal year 2020. CSB anticipates that it will receive Medicaid funding to make up only one half of this general fund reduction. This projection is likely to change significantly based upon the negative impact the COVID-19 crisis is having on billing revenue.

Second, the allocation of funding for the Commonwealth's System Transformation Excellence and Performance (STEP-VA) initiative. The Governor's updated budget in response to the COVID-19 pandemic freezes new spending for STEP-VA until economic circumstances improve. While we appreciate that implementation is on hold and no longer required for the services without an appropriation, at no point during the three years of STEP-VA implementation has DBHDS provided adequate funding to CSBs for the already initiated steps.

Lastly, a new funding challenge deals with how the state may use a behavioral health index to justify future funding decisions for CSBs. This behavioral health equity tool was developed by Virginia Commonwealth University to create a new funding formula based on a population's need for services and the resources currently available in an area to determine how each CSB should be funded. Currently, DBHDS apportions CSB funding based on historical allocations. DBHDS funding to our CSB will likely change, and the CSB's goal is to protect existing dollars by having the index apply only to new funding.

Thank you for your time today. We are grateful for your support and leadership as the county finds solutions to balance the budget. We are committed to working together so CSB can serve the residents of Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

**Testimony of Jennifer Adeli to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
On behalf of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board**

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Good afternoon, my name is Jennifer Adeli, and I am vice chair of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. It is my privilege to be here before you today representing the CSB.

While the county and its frontline workers must immediately address the impact of COVID-19 on the budget and county health and human services, the CSB is committed to ensuring that individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorder receive needed supports during this time. The CSB continues to have all six of its main site locations open, and CSB's medication clinic, pharmacy, and emergency services continue to provide on-site services to clients each day. Most of our outpatient services have transitioned to televideo, and we are seeing an increase of approximately 100 additional people served per day in outpatient services.

The CSB Board shares the County Executive's concern for the fiscal challenges in FY 2021 and understands why the updated budget defers CSB funding increases for Diversion First and the Opioid Task Force. However, we fully anticipate these will remain important county initiatives in future fiscal years. In its four years of operation, Diversion First has provided services to thousands of county residents. The CSB's Merrifield Crisis Response Center serves as an assessment center where law enforcement officers can bring an individual experiencing a mental health crisis. Since 2016, over 1,800 individuals have been diverted from potential arrest at the MCRC. The CSB will continue identifying ways to enhance county diversion programs, including housing assistance and court specialty dockets. County partnerships between the CSB, court services, law enforcement, fire department and the community are key to the success of this initiative and ensure an efficient use of county resources.

The CSB is also grateful for the county's historical commitment to the multiagency Opioid Task Force as we combat the ongoing effects of opioid use in our community. The CSB will continue to prioritize local efforts to prevent opioid misuse and abuse and limit the number of opioid deaths. In FY 2019, the CSB served over 6,900 individuals dealing with substance use disorder, including many with opioid addiction. With the ongoing COVID-19 crisis having a unique impact on those we serve, CSB staff are committed to ensuring vulnerable individuals can access timely treatment, needed medications, and critical emergency services during this time.

Thank you for your continued partnership on these two county initiatives.

**Testimony of Garrett McGuire to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
On behalf of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
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Good afternoon. My name is Garret McGuire, and I am the Mount Vernon District representative to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. My testimony today focuses on CSB's commitment to developmental disability services.

The CSB Board understands the difficult choices that must be made to ensure a balanced budget as our community continues to face new budgetary realities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals with developmental disabilities in the Fairfax-Falls Church area are also facing challenging new realities as businesses close and supported employment opportunities disappear. We will keep the Board of Supervisors apprised on possible future repercussions of the current economic situation and how our service system could be impacted into the future.

The CSB Board is pleased to see that the FY 2021 Updated Budget Proposal does retain funds to support CSB's priority of serving the growing number of individuals with developmental disabilities in an equitable and sustainable manner. We ask that you support the \$342,000 to expand self-directed services (SDS). This funding will help provide services for people with developmental disabilities so they can learn or improve important skills to have a life like ours. Within the context of the immediate COVID-19 crisis, we understand the deferral of 3 new FTE positions. As directed by County Executive Bryan Hill in the revised budget, CSB will work to redirect existing positions to provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities. SDS staff will continue to help families identify resources and provide technical assistance.

We also ask that you support the \$636,000 included in the updated budget to help the CSB meet the requirements of mandated support coordination services for individuals receiving new Medicaid waivers. Eight new FTE positions for mandated support coordination services were deferred in the updated budget. CSB will again work to redirect existing positions to provide these mandated services. As you are aware, the Commonwealth is supposed to exit the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement in July 2021. The state continues to put additional mandates on our CSB to help meet this deadline.

The CSB is grateful for the county's commitment to supporting critical and mandated services for individuals with developmental disabilities. It is important that we continue working together to build a system of care that serves individuals in the most integrated setting and provides quality community-based supports for those with complex needs.

Thank you again for providing the opportunity for the CSB to share its budget priorities and for your support.