

Testimony to the Fairfax County Human Services Council
FY 2018 Advertised Budget – Impact on Services Provided by CSB

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Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

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Good evening, I am Suzette Kern, Vice Chair of the CSB Board. Thank you for this opportunity to share our Board's perspective on the FY 2018 Advertised Budget and its impact on CSB services.

CSB provides services for people of all ages, throughout our community, who have mental health challenges, substance use disorders, and developmental delays and disabilities. Last year, we served over 22,000 people in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

We greatly appreciate the \$2.3 million and 22 Full Time Equivalent positions included in the FY 2018 Advertised Budget for mandated support coordination services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

We also understand the County's continued economic challenges and the hard choices that must be made in order to ensure a balanced budget. So it is within this context that we support the two CSB budget reductions – both in behavioral health services – that are included the FY 2018 Advertised Budget. The proposed CSB budget reductions will save the County over \$833,000 and eliminate 8 full-time equivalent staff positions.

The first is the elimination of CSB's Youth Day Treatment program. This will save the County \$460,000 and 4 full-time equivalent positions while allowing us to deploy existing staff to increase our youth outpatient services. Youth in the current day treatment program have other options for treatment and in-home services, covered by other state and local funding streams.

The second is the elimination of CSB's Community Readiness and Support Program which saves the County \$373,303 and 4 full-time equivalent positions. We believe that contracted service providers in the Northern Virginia region have sufficient capacity to absorb clients in this program. If CRSP is eliminated, CSB will be working in partnership with all stakeholders to carefully implement a transition plan. We anticipate no waitlists as a result of this budget reduction.

I'd like to focus my time with you tonight talking about our top concerns for FY 2018. Last month, in her testimony before this Council, our executive director Tisha Deeghan identified six serious challenges that our community **must** address in FY 2018. These challenges have the greatest impact on the individuals and families we serve and on our overall community. Our CSB Board fully agrees with the challenges she identified. I'd like to summarize those for you now in order of priority.

Number 1: Decriminalize mental illness. CSB is a key player in Fairfax County's Diversion First initiative, which is providing alternatives to incarceration for people with mental illness and disabilities who have low-level encounters with law enforcement. There is **no new funding** for the CSB and our partner agencies for Diversion First in the proposed budget. If there is any opportunity to provide additional funding – this would be our top priority.

Number 2: Combat the opioid epidemic. More Virginians are dying from opioid overdoses than from car crashes. We are facing a deadly epidemic, and CSB is at the forefront of this battle, with our prevention, intervention, treatment, and diversion efforts. The state provides some funding, but solutions like medically assisted treatment remain grossly underfunded. As overdose fatalities increase, our wait lists for treatment services continue to grow.

Number 3: Housing, housing, housing. Having a safe, stable place to live is critical for successful recovery and life in the community. We simply do not have enough affordable permanent housing in our community for people with behavioral health challenges and developmental disabilities. We are only addressing a tiny percentage of the need.

Number 4: Integrate primary and behavioral health care. People with serious mental illness are dying prematurely, not from their mental illness, but from co-occurring, complex medical conditions that could be prevented with integrated primary health care. We can only afford, via grants, to provide 1 to 2 days a week access to primary care for behavioral health clients at our sites; the wait for an appointment can be weeks. For someone with a serious medical condition, as is the case with many of the people we serve, having to wait weeks to see a doctor can have disastrous consequences.

Number 5: Expand behavioral health services for youth. We need more publicly funded youth services. The private sector does not meet the need for affordable outpatient treatment. We are nearing capacity in the CSB. The elimination of the youth day treatment program as proposed in the Advertised Budget will help with this as clinicians are redeployed where needed to expand the number of youth served.

Number 6: Provide equitable and sustainable services for people with developmental disabilities. CSB has new, legally mandated responsibilities to implement a redesigned system of services for people with developmental disabilities, funded through Medicaid waivers. CSB has also historically provided **locally** funded, **non**-mandated employment and day services for individuals with intellectual disability. CSB is challenged now to provide these non-mandated services in an equitable, sustainable way, to more people with different types of developmental disabilities, in addition to intellectual disability.

We know that concerns have been expressed about the lack of **new** funding in FY 2018 for Employment and Day Services for Individuals with developmental disabilities. We believe we have sufficient reserves to fund services for the anticipated number of students graduating in 2017 who will need them, along with other newly eligible folks in the community who may come forward in the near term, per current eligibility guidelines.

However, given the projected number of individuals newly eligible for services as a result of Medicaid Waiver Redesign and the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Board of Supervisors directed CSB to develop specific options for creating an **equitable and sustainable** service model for our non-mandated employment and day services that are so valued by our community. In terms of funding, our employment and day services is our largest Line of Business at about \$26 million. Yet it serves only about 1,300 of the 22,000 people we serve annually.

On February 21, the CSB presented the primary components of such a model, to be phased in over the FY 2017-2018 period. I know that Tisha presented this model to you in more detail when she came before you so I will only give you a high level summary of the proposed new model. The changes impact only new participants; there will be no change for current service recipients. Priority access will be given to new participants with a Medicaid Waiver. New participants without a Medicaid Waiver who demonstrate exceptional hardship will be served through funding set aside by the Board of Supervisors based on objective criteria. When available funding is exhausted, newly eligible individuals will be waitlisted for services in order of need.

I want to thank you for considering these difficult budget issues. We remain deeply appreciative of the sustained and generous support we receive from Fairfax County and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.