



Virginia Network of Private Providers, Inc.

Building Meaningful Lives for Extraordinary People

<http://vnppinc.org>

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An association for persons or organizations with an interest in or that provide support for persons who have mental illness, developmental delay or substance use disorder, and who are licensed by or funded by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

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Open Letter to the 2016 Budget Conferees

I am taking what for us is the unusual step of combining the letters to both House and Senate Conferees because our main objectives for the Budget for 2016-2018 have essentially been met in both versions of the budget. Our agenda for the budget is:

Support the goals for the Redesign of the ID/D Waivers to offer an array of service options to meet the diverse needs of the ID/D individuals who qualify for one of the three Waivers and to encourage supports in the most integrated settings possible by adequately funding those services which will help achieve that outcome.

Both House and Senate budgets essentially retained the language in the Governor's Budget which enabled redesign of the three ID/D Waivers to be effective in July of this year:

- The House amendment **[306 #9h]** would delay the implementation of some new services; we appreciate the explanation that this is not intended to disrupt existing services, however, given that "Community Engagement" is a new name for an existing model within the Day Support Service which is widely used especially to the benefit of those individuals who do not do as well in larger center-based settings, we hope that specific service may be initiated in fiscal year 2017.
- The Senate included **[306 #17s]** what appears to be needed specificity about the services and proposed rates; we have asked that some language be added to clarify how the level of need (SIS level and payment tier) will be calculated. The Senate also included an amendment **[306 #23s]** to correct an error in the calculation of the rates for Sponsored Residential Services in Northern Virginia.

We would not object to the implementation of some services that are truly "new" being delayed for a year (as proposed by the House), but would support the clarifications and addition included in the Senate's language..

In both House and Senate there is an effort to further delineate the uses and processes for the Trust Fund; we support this effort. We particularly thank the House for including language to "give preference to projects involving existing Virginia providers to expand service capacity."

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While we acknowledge that continued efforts will be necessary to assist providers to rise to the expectation for fully integrated services; we do, at this point, think that the effort needed to develop and maintain the “Institute on Community Inclusion” [313 #8s] will be a significant distraction in this biennium when we are trying to accomplish a total redesign and integration of three waivers and two very different service systems. We hope that this idea for an Institute would be reconsidered in FY19-20.

Support the creation of viable community-based services in a sustainable business model, which includes an appropriate level of revenue over cost to meet quality standards, in advance of any reduction in functional capacity of a DBHDS state facility.

We specifically included this agenda item because of the DBHDS proposal to “plan to close” Catawba Hospital; we could support either version of “planning in advance of action” as proposed by House [319 #1h & #2h] or Senate [319 #3s].

Partner with other advocates to request funding to mitigate the concerns of the families who have waited the longest for a “DD Waiver slot” when the waiting lists for the Waivers are combined into one needs based list.

As many of the individuals who have been on the DD Wait List the longest are receiving services through the EDCD Waiver, the Senate amendments [306 # #7s & #9s] to add 300 slots is slightly more generous than the House amendment [306 #4h] which adds a total of 150 slots (100 specifically for the longest waiting on the DD Wait List) in the biennium, and retains the 100 reserve slots already in the Budget. We support the Senate version, but suggest that the language designating the 100 slots for the individuals longest on the DD Waitlist be included.

Thank you for your efforts and your support of those who are the most vulnerable of Virginia’s citizens.