



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Executive Department

### Executive Directive 4 (2015)

#### **ESTABLISHING THE CENTER FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND JUSTICE**

During the past decade, Virginia lawmakers, the Supreme Court and Executive Branch agencies have spearheaded various efforts to identify and address the needs of persons with mental illness who become involved with the criminal justice system. While many initiatives have demonstrated some success, significant challenges remain in ensuring coordination and collaboration across the behavioral health and criminal justice systems at local, regional and state levels.

On April 8, 2014, I issued Executive Order 12, reestablishing the Task Force for Improving Mental Health Services and Crisis Response. Among the most significant recommendations from the Task Force is the need to create a center of excellence to collaboratively identify and utilize public and private resources to more effectively coordinate implementation of programs, policies and resources to address behavioral health needs within the Commonwealth, particularly for those individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

In order to achieve its goals of better coordination among behavioral health and justice agencies in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors, the center shall pursue a collaborative, multi-systems approach in the following areas:

- Data collection and analytics
- Evidence-based programs and practices
- Education, outreach and training
- Technical assistance and resource development

Accordingly, I hereby direct the establishment of the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice (Center) and direct the Secretaries of Public Safety & Homeland Security and Health & Human Resources to oversee this process. The work will be led by an Executive Leadership Council (Council) which will develop the organizational structure and an implementation plan for the Center.

The Council shall be convened by the Deputy Secretary of Public Safety & Homeland Security and the Deputy Secretary of Health & Human Resources.

***Center for Behavioral Health and Justice***  
***2015- 2016 Organizational Structure and Implementation Plan***

**Background:**

In October 2014, the *Governor's Task Force for Improving Mental Health Services and Crisis Response* sent Governor McAuliffe a set of 25 recommendations designed to help expand access to Virginians with mental health needs, strengthen administrative processes and to improve quality of services throughout the Commonwealth. Given the national and state data showing a disproportionately high number of individuals with behavioral health challenges involved in the criminal justice system, the Task Force made specific recommendations to address issues with this population. A key component of those recommendations was a proposed Center for Behavioral Health and Justice (CBHJ or the Center): a virtual center of excellence and an interagency collaborative to better coordinate behavioral health and justice services by identifying and utilizing Virginia's resources more effectively. The initial focus of the Center will be on preventing and diverting individuals with behavioral health issues away from the criminal justice system, and appropriately addressing the behavioral health needs of those already involved in any aspect of the state's criminal justice system.

In March of 2015, the Governor issued Executive Directive 4 (attached) to establish the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice, and requested an executive leadership team (comprised of leadership from the Office of the Lt. Governor, Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services; Department of Criminal Justice Services; Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections, Department of Health, and Department of Medical Assistance Services) develop an organizational structure and implementation plan by July 1, 2015. This document establishes the initial organizational structure and will be used over the course of the next year to implement the Center's plans and activities.

**Mission of the Center:**

The Center's guiding vision is that throughout the Commonwealth all individuals at risk for involvement or already involved in the justice system, who also have behavioral health issues, will receive timely and evidence-based treatment consistent with best practices, in the least restrictive settings possible.

The Center's mission is to support the development and implementation of state, regional and local multi-system responses that prevent and reduce involvement in the criminal justice system for people with behavioral health needs. When diversion is not feasible or appropriate, the Center supports collaboration to enhance the availability and delivery of evidence-based behavioral health services in jails and prisons.

**Key Roles of the Center:**

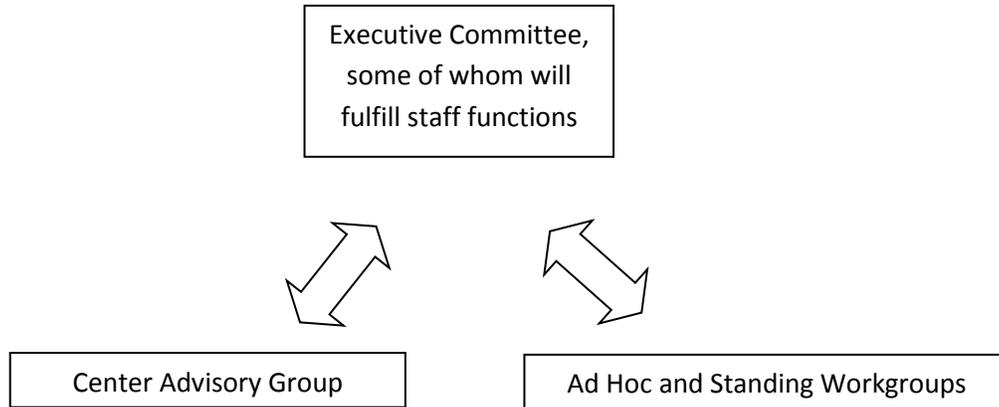
The Center will play a unique role not currently being filled in the Commonwealth by: developing and implementing a multi-agency, stakeholder-informed action plan to improve outcomes; providing coordination across agencies and facilitating state and local partnerships; and serving as a central clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of data and best

practices for the target population of individuals at risk for involvement or involved in the criminal justice system.

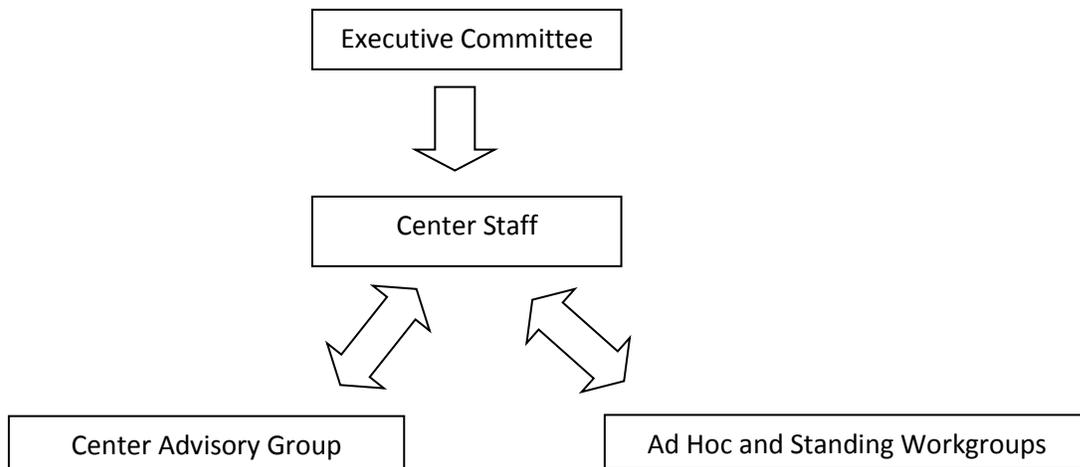
1. Action Plan: The Center will develop and implement a multi-agency, stakeholder-informed action plan for serving the target population. This will include a strong emphasis on prevention activities aimed at effectively redirecting individuals from the criminal and juvenile justice systems whenever possible. The Center will:
  - Conduct a comprehensive assessment of resources and gaps in the system
  - Based on that assessment, best practices and Virginia specific data the Center will develop a strategic plan for improving outcomes for this population
  
2. Collaboration: The Center will provide coordination across agencies serving the target population and will facilitate collaborative relationships among state and local entities to improve outcomes. The Center will:
  - Serve in an advisory capacity on policy affecting the target population
  - Facilitate open communication, new partnerships, consensus building and joint funding opportunities across agencies, secretariats and other stakeholder entities
  - Promote coordination between state and local agencies, stakeholders, partners and other entities
  - Lead coordinated efforts to educate stakeholders and the public on current and emerging issues
  
3. Data and Resources: The Center will serve as a central clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of evidence based and best practices; improve data collection and sharing for purposes of better understanding and addressing statewide gaps and policy development; and help identify and coordinate resources and grant opportunities. The Center will:
  - Share best-practices across the Commonwealth and devise strategies to encourage the replication of these practices at the local and state levels
  - Partner with higher education institutions to increase the Center's capacity to facilitate data sharing, research and analytics

**Initial Phase Organizational Structure:**

During its initial phase, the Center’s organizational structure will remain quite simple until resources are secured to hire staff. The roles of each of these entities are outlined below.



**Long Term Organizational Structure:**



Executive Committee: This group shall be composed of: The Lieutenant Governor, the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and the Director of Department of Criminal Justice Services or their designees. This body will provide final approval for operations, priorities and projects of the Center. Once the Center has the capacity to hire staff, the staff role(s) and responsibilities will be separated from those of the Executive Committee.

Staff: The Center will begin work immediately to identify resources to identify and/or hire staff to coordinate the activities of the Center. Until such time, the roles and responsibilities of this office will be filled by staff from the Administration, specifically Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources; Deputy Secretary of Public Safety; and Policy Staff to the Lt. Governor.

Center Advisory Group: A diverse stakeholder and agency advisory group shall provide input on the existing needs within the Commonwealth and counsel on the priorities and projects of the Center. This group shall be composed of representatives from among the following: academic institutions, the Attorney General's Office, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Department of Corrections, Department of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Health, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Medical Assistance Services, Department of Veterans Services, the legislature, Mental Health America-Virginia, National Alliance on Mental Illness of Virginia, Office of the Executive Secretary, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys, Virginia Association of Community Service Boards, the Virginia Association of Counties, Virginia Association of Regional Jails, Virginia CIT Coalition Statewide Advisory Committee, Virginia Drug Court Association, Virginia Indigent Defense Commission, the Virginia Municipal League, the Virginia Sheriff's Association, Virginia State Police, and VOCAL.

Ad Hoc and Standing Workgroups: Workgroups of state agency staff and outside stakeholders will conduct the work of the Center and may exist on a permanent standing basis, or be created for specific projects or to address emerging issues. These groups will be expected to make recommendations to the Executive Committee and Center staff about addressing gaps in the system and improving services. Additionally, other entities may request that the Center create ad-hoc workgroups to further examine specific issues within the expertise of the Center.

### **Implementation Plan and Timeline:**

During its initial phase, administration staff will fulfill many of the operational functions of the Center, which shall eventually be taken over by Center staff. This will include establishing each of the bodies related to the Center's organizational structure. Throughout this phase, the Center Advisory Group will identify and recommend priority issues for the Center, which shall be reported to the Executive Committee for their consideration. Staff will pursue opportunities to begin a comprehensive needs assessment, such as a statewide, cross-systems mapping exercise. Additionally, they will begin forming standing workgroups, with a Data workgroup as a top priority.

#### Summer – Fall 2015:

- Incorporate feedback from the Governor's office into the plan
- Operationalize the Executive Committee and Center Advisory Group with clear goals and responsibilities, meeting schedules and work plans
- Finalize structure with stakeholders
- Establish Standing Workgroups with clear membership, goals, and meeting schedules

#### Fall 2015 – Winter 2016:

- Conduct a comprehensive, statewide assessment of resources and gaps in the systems serving this population, such as a statewide, cross-systems mapping exercise
- Identify specific priorities within the scope of the Center and begin project work in those areas via standing and ad-hoc workgroups
- Explore all funding options and grant opportunities and seek grants to provide for needs assessment and Center staff

Spring 2016:

- Review priorities, structure, operational and sustainability plan of the Center based on year one experience, funding opportunities, etc.

July 1, 2016:

- Submit an annual report, policy recommendations as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee, and an updated operational plan to the Governor

The Council shall also include the Commissioners of the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services and the Department of Health, and the Directors of the Departments of Corrections, Criminal Justice Services, Juvenile Justice, and Medical Assistance Services.

The Council shall present me with an organization and implementation plan for the Center by July 1, 2015.



Attest:

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Terence R. McAuliffe, Governor

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Levar M. Stoney, Secretary of the Commonwealth