

**2011 Assessment
of the
Disability Services System in Virginia**

June 2011

**The Commonwealth's
Developmental Disabilities Council**

2011 Assessment of the Disability Services System in Virginia

June 2011

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Preface

Background: The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, the Commonwealth's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council, is pleased to provide its 2011 *Assessment of the Disability Services System in Virginia*, produced in accordance with the *Code of Virginia* (51.5-33 [2]) and the federal *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act* (PL 106-402, 2000). This is the Board's third assessment of the state's disability services system. Previous editions were published in 2006 and 2008. The interval between assessments was lengthened from two to three years by the 2008 General Assembly.

This latest edition features a new chapter largely consolidating coverage of services provided through the Medicaid public insurance program. Medicaid was covered primarily in the Community Supports chapter of previous editions, but other chapters included significant amounts of Medicaid information as well. Coverage of Information and Advocacy Resources has been reformatted and is now contained in an appendix to the assessment.

The Executive Summary of previous editions has been replaced with a new introductory chapter on Key Findings and Board Recommendations. It replaces the previous Areas of Concern and Recommendations sections that previously concluded individual topical chapters and presents the Board's findings and recommendations in a more concise and targeted manner stressing broad-based, system-wide issues. Key developments since the 2008 assessment, recent data trends, and other information specific to each service area are still presented in their respective chapters. This new introductory chapter is also available as a separate document.

Like the previous editions, the 2011 assessment describes disability services and supports that are primarily—but not exclusively—funded, operated, licensed, regulated, or contracted for by state agencies. For each service topic, it details eligibility requirements, how services are accessed and delivered, the types of services available, costs and payment sources, and oversight and quality assurance responsibilities. Each chapter provides longitudinal data showing trends in utilization and expenditures for specific services, as appropriate and available. A reference list that includes key websites concludes each chapter. As requested by readers of previous editions, online links to key reports and programs are also included within the body of each chapter.

Scope and Methodology: To develop its assessment, the Board sought public comment both on changes to and experiences with the system over the past three years and on ways in which this edition could be improved. In March and April of 2010, Board staff conducted six public comment forums across the state. The Board also solicited feedback through its newsletter, website, and e-mail solicitations for a six-week period. This input was compiled and analyzed by the Board to help shape assessment development.

Descriptive information in the assessment was gathered from agency planning and performance reports, task force reports, legislative studies, state and federal laws and regulations, agency policies, state agency and organizational websites, direct communications with their

staffs, and other available sources. Except where noted, this assessment contains 2010 data along with longitudinal data for comparison. State agencies were asked to provide the most current data, but it was not always available. With the exception of the Key Findings and Board Recommendations, drafts of descriptive content were reviewed by agency personnel to verify the accuracy of the information and data presented.

An ad hoc committee of Board members worked with staff to review and consider all public comment as well as descriptive information and data for the assessment in draft form. After thorough consideration and discussion, the committee identified key findings and developed recommendations for system improvements. The results of their deliberations were provided to the full Board for review and comment prior to the completion of the final draft of the assessment. Their decisions regarding the findings and recommendations contained in the assessment are consistent with the values and tenets of the *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act* that requires Developmental Disabilities Councils to engage in activities:

“...which contribute to a coordinated, consumer- and family-centered and directed, comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive, and be integrated and included in all facets of community life.”

This assessment does not address all of the services and programs available to persons with disabilities in Virginia. Pursuant to the Board’s federal requirements, it focuses on individuals with developmental disabilities (DD); however, many of the services addressed affect persons with other disabilities, and the Board’s findings and recommendations are relevant to those populations as well. Services specifically designed for individuals with serious mental illness or substance abuse disorders are not covered since these areas are not part of the Board’s federally authorized mission. This assessment also does not address services for individuals with disabilities who are in juvenile and adult correctional settings. The Board recognizes that other gaps in coverage may be identified, and that despite its best efforts, there may be undetected errors or important issues that have been left unaddressed. Readers are encouraged to bring those oversights to its attention, and efforts will be made to correct them in future editions.

Acknowledgements: The Board would like to express its deep appreciation to all those who contributed to development of its 2011 assessment, which was possible only with the information and cooperation provided by a host of individuals both inside and outside of state government. The Board is especially grateful to the numerous state agency officials and staff who worked with the Board and responded to requests for information, data, and content reviews. Their assistance in clarifying or identifying critical issues and ensuring content accuracy was invaluable. The guidance of individuals with disabilities, advocates, and others who provided public comments—whether in person or by mail, fax, or phone—is greatly appreciated.

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