



PROVIDER DESCRIPTIONS

MEDICAL AND PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

Psychiatrist

Psychiatrists are medical doctors whose education includes a medical degree and at least four additional years of study and training. Psychiatrists are experts in the diagnosis and treatment of mental health disorders and in the use of psychotropic medication. Those who pass the national examination administered by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology become board certified in psychiatry. Psychiatrists provide medical/psychiatric evaluation and treatment for emotional and behavioral problems and psychiatric disorders. As physicians, psychiatrists can prescribe and monitor medications. **Child and adolescent psychiatrists** have two additional years of advanced training beyond general psychiatry in work with children, adolescents, and families. Psychiatrists are regulated by the Virginia Board of Medicine.

Education/training: MD or DO, as well as completion of a multi-year residency in psychiatry, usually in a hospital setting and under supervision of senior psychiatrists

Where found: Hospitals (regular and psychiatric), community services boards, private outpatient mental health clinics, and private practice

Discussed in this chapter:

Medical and Psychiatric Services

- Psychiatrist
- Pediatrician
- Nurse Practitioner (NP)
- Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialist

Psychological and Therapeutic Services

- Psychologist
- School Psychologist
- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Licensed Social Worker

Specialized Therapeutic Services

- Certified Sex Offender Treatment Provider (CSOTP)
- Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC)
- Certified Substance Abuse Treatment Practitioner
- Certified Substance Abuse Counseling Assistant

Pediatrician

A pediatrician is a primary care physician who focuses on the care of children from birth to 21 years of age, who specializes in preventive health maintenance for healthy children, and who provides medical care for those who are seriously or chronically ill. Pediatricians are also increasingly involved with the prevention, early detection, and management of behavioral, developmental, and functional social problems that affect children and adolescents. Pediatricians are regulated by the Virginia Board of Medicine.

Education/training: MD or DO, as well as completion of a multi-year residency in pediatrics

Where found: Hospitals, public and private health clinics, and private practice

Nurse Practitioner (NP)

Nurse practitioners engage in the practice of medicine in collaboration with and under the medical direction and supervision of a licensed physician. “Medical direction” means the collaborative development of a written protocol between the nurse practitioners and the physician. Nurse practitioners with prescriptive authority may prescribe medication within the scope of a written practice agreement in Virginia that is regulated by the Board of Nursing and the Board of Medicine under a Committee of the Joint Boards. Nurse practitioners hold national certification in an area of specialty (family practice, psychiatry, pediatrics, etc.). In Virginia, most nurse practitioners work under the supervision of licensed physicians, but under certain conditions they may practice independently.

Education/training: RN, MA in nursing with nurse practitioner concentration, certification from a national board

Where found: Psychiatric hospitals, community services boards, private outpatient mental health clinics, and private practice

Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialist

Psychiatric clinical nurse specialists are professionals are registered nurses who have a master’s degree in psychiatric mental health nursing and are licensed by the state to provide care, counseling, and therapy to persons with psychological, emotional and behavioral needs. An accreditation as an Advanced Practicing Registered Nurse (APRN) by an appropriate credentialing body is necessary for this provider to receive third party reimbursement. Psychiatric clinical nurse specialists are regulated by the Virginia Board of Nursing.

Education/training: RN, MA in psychiatric/mental health nursing

Where found: Psychiatric hospitals, community services boards, private outpatient mental health clinics, and private practice

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

Psychologist

A psychologist is a mental health professional with an advanced degree in psychology. **Clinical psychologists** can provide psychological evaluation and treatment for emotional and behavioral problems and disorders. They specialize in the practice of psychotherapy in individual, family, marital, and group settings. **Child psychologists** specialize in diagnosing and treating the psychological, cognitive, emotional, developmental, behavioral, and family problems of children and adolescents. Psychologists are unable to prescribe medications. Psychologists are regulated by the Virginia Board of Psychology.

Education/training: PhD or PsyD

Where found: Psychiatric hospitals, residential treatment centers, community services boards, private outpatient mental health and substance abuse clinics, and private practice

School Psychologist

School psychologists are specifically licensed to provide psychological evaluation and treatment for emotional and behavioral problems and disorders in a school setting. Unlike clinical psychologists, school psychologists typically do not have a PhD. School psychologists are regulated by the Virginia Board of Psychology.

Education/training: MA with an endorsement in psychology

Where found: Public and private schools, special education residential schools, special education day schools, and therapeutic day treatment centers

Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)

Licensed professional counselors (LPCs) are licensed to provide individual, group, family, and couples counseling. LPCs must obtain supervised clinical experience and must pass a state licensing exam. LPCs are regulated by federal and state laws, as well as their own code of ethics as developed by various national organizations such as the American Counseling Association. Not all counselors are LPCs. LPCs are regulated by the Virginia Board of Counseling.

Education/training: MA or MS, 3,400 hours of supervised residency in counseling practice, including 2000 hours of face-to-face contact with clients

Where found: Residential treatment centers, community services boards, private outpatient mental health, and substance abuse clinics

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)

Licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFTs) are licensed to provide therapy in the context of family and marital relationships. These professionals are trained in the assessment and treatment of cognitive, affective, or

Provider Descriptions

behavioral, mental, and emotional disorders within the context of marriage and family systems through the application of therapeutic and family systems theories and techniques. LMFTs are regulated by the Virginia Board of Counseling.

Education/training: MA or MS, 3,400 hours of supervised residency in marriage and family therapy practice including 2000 hours of face-to-face contact with clients

Where found: Community services boards, private outpatient mental health and substance abuse clinics, and private practices

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs) are professionally qualified at the autonomous practice level to provide direct diagnostic, preventive, and treatment services that may include psychotherapy and counseling for mental disorders, substance abuse, marriage and family dysfunction, and problems caused by social and psychological stress or health impairment. LCSWs are regulated by the Virginia Board of Social Work.

Education/training: MSW or DSW, supervised experience in a treatment setting

Where found: Local social service agencies, hospitals (both regular and psychiatric), residential treatment centers, group homes, community services boards, and private outpatient mental health and substance abuse clinics

Licensed Social Worker

Licensed Social Workers are trained to provide diagnostic, preventive, and treatment services, but on a supervised rather than independent basis. Licensed social workers are regulated by the Virginia Board of Social Work.

Education/training: BA or MSW; supervised experience in a treatment setting

Where found: Local social service agencies, hospitals (both regular and psychiatric), residential treatment centers, group homes, community services boards, private outpatient mental health, and substance abuse clinics

SPECIALIZED THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

Certified Sex Offender Treatment Provider (CSOTP)

Certified sex offender treatment provider (CSOTPs) are mental health professionals from the disciplines of counseling, social work, psychology, nursing, or medicine who have received specialized training in sex offender evaluation and treatment. CSOTPs are regulated by the Virginia Board of Psychology.

Education/training: MA, PhD, PsyD, MD, or DO; 50 hours of training in sex offender treatment, 2000 hours of post-degree clinical experience in assessment/treatment with at least 200 hours with sex offender clients

Provider Descriptions

Where found: Residential treatment centers, therapeutic group homes, community services boards, and private outpatient mental health clinics

Certified Substance Abuse Treatment Practitioner

Certified substance abuse treatment practitioners are licensed to provide advanced substance abuse treatment and independent, direct, and unsupervised treatment to such individuals or groups of individuals, and to plan, evaluate, supervise, and direct substance abuse treatment provided by others. Certified substance abuse treatment practitioners are regulated by the Virginia Board of Counseling.

Education/training: MA or MS, additional coursework, and a supervised residency in substance abuse treatment

Where found: Inpatient substance abuse treatment centers, community services boards, private outpatient mental health, and substance abuse clinics

Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC)

Certified Substance Abuse Counselors (CSACs) are certified to perform substance abuse treatment functions, which generally include screening, intake, orientation, assessment, recovery, relapse prevention planning, substance abuse treatment, and case management. However, CSACs must practice under the supervision of a licensed substance abuse treatment practitioner or another licensed mental health professional unless they hold another license for independent practice or are working in an exempt setting. CSACs may also supervise certified substance abuse counseling assistants. CSACs are regulated by the Virginia Board of Counseling.

Education/training: BA, additional coursework, and supervised experience in substance abuse treatment

Where found: Inpatient substance abuse treatment centers, community services boards, private outpatient mental health, and substance abuse clinics

Certified Substance Abuse Counseling Assistant

Certified Substance Abuse Counseling Assistants are certified to perform the substance abuse treatment functions of orientation, implementation of substance abuse treatment plans, case management, substance abuse or dependence crisis intervention, record keeping, and consultation with other professionals. Certified substance abuse counseling assistants may participate in recovery group discussions, but they cannot engage in counseling with either individuals or groups or engage in independent or autonomous practice. They act under the supervision of a certified substance abuse counselor or other licensed mental health professional. Certified Substance Abuse Counseling Assistant are regulated by the Virginia Board of Counseling.

Education/training: High school diploma or equivalent, 300 hours of substance abuse treatment education and experience, including 180 hours of supervised substance abuse tasks with clients

Where found: Inpatient substance abuse treatment centers, community services boards, private outpatient mental health, and substance abuse clinics.

The Collection of Evidenced-Based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs, 10th Collection
Virginia Commission on Youth, 2025

The information contained herein is strictly for informational and educational purposes only and is not designed to replace the advice and counsel of a physician, mental health provider, or other medical professional. If you require such advice or counsel, you should seek the services of a licensed mental health provider, physician, or other medical professional. The Commission on Youth is not rendering professional advice and makes no representations regarding the suitability of the information contained herein for any purpose.