

# VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

April 2, 2013  
2:00 p.m.  
House Room 1

## MINUTES

### **Attending:**

Delegates Christopher Peace, Mamye BaCote, Robert Brink, Peter Farrell, Anne Crockett-Stark  
Citizen members Gary Close, Frank Royal, Charles Slemp

### **Not Attending:**

Delegate Beverly Sherwood  
Senators Harry Blevins and Stephen Martin  
*Note: One Senate seat is vacant.*

### **Guest:**

Senator Bryce Reeves

### **Staff Attending:**

Amy Atkinson, Leah Hamaker, Meg Burruss, Joyce Garner

## **I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks**

*Delegate Christopher K. Peace, Chair*

Delegate Peace welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Commission's 2013 study year and asked members to introduce themselves.

## **II. Approval of Commission on Youth 2013 Study Plans**

*Amy M. Atkinson, Executive Director*

- *Evidence-based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs*

Ms. Atkinson first presented to the Commission the study plan for the upcoming revision of the *Collection of Evidence-Based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. This revision will be a major project for the Commission on Youth, as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Fifth Edition* will be published in May, thus requiring a complete rewrite of the *Collection*. Anticipated changes include creating of a single diagnostic category of Autism Spectrum Disorder and reduction of the diagnostic criteria; adding a new disorder in children, "temper dysregulation with dysphoria" to describe negative mood with bursts of rage; and revising criteria for some eating disorders, including creating a separate "binge eating disorder" distinct from bulimia. The Commission will convene advisory groups to assist in the revision.

Delegate Peace asked a question about the change in the *DSM-V* to a single diagnostic category of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Delegate BaCote asked a question about the role schools play in diagnosing Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- *Assessment of Mental Health Needs of Juvenile Offenders*

Ms. Atkinson next presented the study plan for the Assessment of Mental Health Needs of Juvenile Offenders. This study arises out of Senate Bill 928, introduced by Senator Jill Holtzman Vogel during the 2013 General Assembly Session, which would require an interdisciplinary team to evaluate the service needs of a juvenile when the Commonwealth is seeking the juvenile's commitment. Such an evaluation would be ordered when the juvenile has been placed in a secure facility, identified with a mental health need from the mental health assessment conducted by the secure facility, and adjudicated delinquent. For this study, an advisory group will not be convened; instead Commission staff will meet with and interview various stakeholders.

Delegate Peace emphasized that this study should be narrowly focused to address the specific issue presented in Senator Vogel's legislation.

- *Three Branch Institute on Child Social and Emotional Well-being*

This plan would require collaboration and coordination among the executive, legislative and judicial branches in Virginia's application for the National Governors Association's Three Branch Institute on Child Social and Emotional Well-Being Request for Proposal to improve the social and emotional well-being of foster care children in Virginia. The Three-Branch Institute on Child Social and Emotional Well-Being of the National Governors Association seeks to improve the social and emotional well-being of children in foster care in participating states. The Institute's Request for Proposal requires the coordination and collaboration of the state's executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. The goal is for states to develop a state-specific plan for children and youth receiving foster care services through the state's child welfare system. This study requires the collaboration among the Commission, and the executive and judicial branches to develop a coordinated plan of action, and, if selected by the National Governors Association, to meet the requirements of the grant.

Delegate BaCote asked which ages would be studied, and Mr. Slemp asked if the focus of the study would be the well-being of children while in foster care only. Ms. Atkinson informed the group that the well-being of children *after* they leave foster care would be studied as well.

Delegate Peace suggested working to get the Three Branch Institute conference, taking place in July 2013, to be held in Virginia.

**The three study plans were voted on by the Commission and were adopted unanimously.**

### III. **Fathers and Families: What's Missing and What Works**

*Bob Ruthazer, CFLE, Founder and Programs Director  
First Things First of Greater Richmond*

*LeMar A. Bowers  
President and C.E.O., The Center for Counseling and Community Affairs  
Fatherhood & Urban Programs Instructor, First Things First of Greater Richmond*

*Donald R. Stern, M.D., M.P.H., Director  
Richmond City Health District, Virginia Department of Health*

Mr. Ruthazer, presenting first, offered apologies from Mr. Bowers, who was unable to present due to illness. The purpose of this presentation was to discuss why family fragmentation is an issue, while highlighting ways families could be strengthened. Family fragmentation is an issue with the far-reaching costs on a community. Family fragmentation costs are an estimated \$2.4 billion each year in Virginia, and \$205 million each year in the City of Richmond. More than that, however, are the negative impacts on the children of a single parent, which were stressed in the presentation. First Things First of Greater Richmond and the Richmond Family and Fatherhood Initiative have goals aiming to strengthen the families, in turn improving the community. Among these goals are reducing the number of pregnancies and births to single women and increasing the percentage of children raised in two-parent households.

The presenters also recommended a "1% Solution," which would require one percent of Virginia's TANF funds to be used for Family Strengthening education.

Delegate Peace asked about how the "cost of family fragmentation" was determined. This number is based on the cost of services and resources provided to the families, mothers, and children of fatherless homes. Delegate Peace then asked whether that calculation included Virginia costs only. The presenters informed the Commission that the calculation included both Virginia and federal costs.

Mr. Slemp asked about organizations elsewhere in Virginia and Delegate BaCote asked about the relationship with Healthy Families in Hampton, which aims to do a similar thing. Delegate Peace asked about the ability for this program to be extended to include Greater Richmond.

Delegate Crockett-Stark spoke to emphasize the importance of community involvement in helping these fathers secure employment. She stated that there is a need for distinguishing felonies from non-violent felonies, and one-time offenders from repeat offenders.

Delegate Peace suggested developing a list of available resources throughout the state.

#### **IV. Status Report: Child Well-being in Virginia – January 2013**

*John R. Morgan, Ph.D., Director  
Voices for Virginia's Children*

Mr. Morgan gave an overview of data trends in several areas, including: poverty/economic security, early childhood, education, and child welfare/safety. The conclusion presented to the Commission was that the well-being of adolescents in Virginia is improving, while increasing poverty levels presents a serious threat to the well-being of younger children. Mr. Morgan and others with Voices for Virginia's Children highlighted specific issues facing children in Virginia. In the area of mental health, increases in the number of children living in poverty results in an increased demand for public sector resources. In the area of child welfare, the presenter pointed out that permanency remains an issue for youth in foster care and that youth aging out of foster care continue to face unique challenges.

Mr. Close asked whether the subject population had changed since the last compilation of data, which it has not. Delegate Peace asked for more insight into which policies and programs should continue, which could be eliminated, and which areas could be improved.

#### **V. Activities in State Government Related to Youth and Families**

*Ms. Atkinson*

Ms. Atkinson presented the Commission on Youth's *Activities in State Government Related to Youth and Families*. This resource is regularly updated and summarizes the activities of various state agencies and other organizations. It is available to Commission members and the public.

#### **VI. Adjourn**

Delegate Peace announced that the Family Impact Seminar for legislators and stakeholders will be held on May 21 in the Capitol. The Commission on Youth partners with Virginia Commonwealth University on this annual event.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Public comment will be received at this meeting. (*No comment was received.*)