

Virginia Addiction & Recovery Council (VARC)

December 11, 2025 1:00pm –2:00 P.M.

Physical Location: Virginia Department of Social Services

5600 Cox Rd

Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

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Meeting ID: 256 970 741
756

Passcode: BcDjQp

Nathanael Rudney, Meeting Facilitator
Del. Adele McClure, Secretary

Participants:

In person:

*Matt Santucci, V-ABC
Diane Oehl, DBHDS
Jessica Lee, VADOC
Allen Stewart, VADOC
Jennifer MacArthur, DCJS
Kristin Hunter, DCJS
Tiffany George, DMAS
Jill Chichowicz, 2 End the Stigma
Emily Witt, DMV
Yitzy Halon, VDSS
Keely Kiewiet, VFHY
Dr. Colin Greene, Special Advisor
Dr. Peter Breslin, MD
Yitzy Halon, Mainspring Recovery*

Virtual:

*Chuck Wilcox, VA Association of Addiction Professionals
Don McCourtney, DBHDS
Latril Mariano, Western Tidewater CSB
Rebecca Holmes, Highlands CSB
LeNelle Mozell, VACSB
Anne Rogers, DBHDS
Madelyn Lent, DBHDS
Stephen Wade, VDSS
Del. Brianna Sewell
Michele Satterlund, McCauley, Satterlund & Cessa
Mimi, Sedjat, Eastern Shore CSB
Mike Sizemore, SAARA of Virginia
Suzanne Roberts, VDSS
I'asha Hornes- SAARA of Virginia
Heather Martinsen, VACSB
April Miller, Allegheny Highlands CSB
Angela Brown, Western Tidewater CSB*

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONSNathanael Rudney, DBHDS

Attendance: We ask that each member share his/her role on the council and how long he/she has served

Quorum reached

II. Review of Minutes from October 23, 2025 Meeting-...Nathanael Rudney, DBHDS

Motion for minutes to be approved, discussion was had, Lenelle referenced the CRC and corrected that instead of peer services being offered in-house, it should say that peer services are provided at drop-in center

Minutes approved as amended

III. Old Business

A. Opportunity for members of VARC to share summary of organizational changes or updates from their respective districts, agencies, and other entities... *Nathanael*

Rudney, DBHDS

- *Lenelle reiterated that the youth and adult CRC in Region 2 has been opened*
- *Chuck shared a brief update about the Brown vs. Smith case related to barrier crimes, that finding on behalf of Brown has been appealed by the Commonwealth, initial briefing will be completed in January, this could change though w/ administration changes*

IV. New Business

A. Review of nominations and election of Council Chair...*Nathanael Rudney, DBHDS*

- *Dr. Peter Breslin was nominated for council president given the vacancy*
- *Dr. Breslin introduced himself and shared a little about his vision of the council which included prioritizing increased actions towards concrete advocacy and endorsement of legislation/policy changes*
- *Motion was introduced for accepting nominee, council voted in favor of naming Dr. Breslin as council president*

B. Review changes to outpatient treatment center (OTC) regulations...*Diane Oehl,*

*Office of Addiction,
Recovery, and
Wellness Supports,
DBHDS*

Diane Oehl is the State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA) presented on the updated federal regulations for MAT and implications for the Commonwealth. She shared that the goals of the updated regulations are to:

- *Increase access to treatment*
- *Promote patient-centered care*
- *Promote the patient- prescriber relationship*
- *Advance patient autonomy and trust*
- *Enhance efficiency and reduce stigma*
- *Strengthen retention in care*

The major regulations changes reference:

- *Who can prescribe MOUD*
- *Direct admit capability*
- *Take-home schedule*
- *Quality of care*
- *Drug screening and counseling requirements*
- *Prescription Monitoring Program*

Comments:

Discussion during presentation was had around the changes to take homes for addiction medicine, Comments were made regarding the importance of lock boxes as well as some of the barriers and

challenges including stigma, Addiction medicine providers do not want patients walking out the door without having received treatment if they do not have a lock box, however, council members shared their positive impact on safety, Members discussed their sporadic availability and potential impact of SAMHSA's new harm reduction guidelines.

Lenelle commented on lock and talk initiatives and that anyone in the community can get free lock boxes. She also advocated regarding addiction medicine, that the liquid is more precise dose than the wafers and depending on someone's dosage that a nurse would have to make sure that she's cutting it properly Allen shared about needing conscientious providers and that they mitigate the risk of prescribing take homes, Dr. Breslin added that patients don't often have the family or supports and can't access transportation and this is where take homes can be critical, they also can prevent children having to come along to the clinic

Mimi added that messaging is critical and that OTPs need to be well informed on needing to have protocol for having children in clinics and that in her locality Medicaid transportation was denying individuals with children

Discussion was held regarding prescription monitoring and the critical need for prescribers to be able to access and share patient information with the required disclosures

Nathanael suggested that Virginia Dept. of Health Professions come to present to VARC on the PMP updates and changes

Discussion following presentation, Dr. Breslin commented that realistically that it's patient preference for buprenorphine vs. methadone and there should not be coercion, he advocated that medical guidance should not be paternalistic but more synergistic and that guidance should be provided

See appendix A for PowerPoint

- C. Discuss potential legislative changes and bills being introduced for which the Council may wish to endorse.....Nathanael Rudney, DBHDS

Del. Sewell shared that given the incoming administration, insight vs. clarity on issues she's keyed in on, Senate committees have changed rules that only allow ten bills to be carried per state senator, Also, Senate has been more candid about legislative priorities, as well as House, Legislation will be introduced later as the GA session starts Jan. 14th. Del. Sewell identified that paid family and medical leave has been emphasized by the governor- this would allow up to 12 weeks of seeking care/treatment for oneself or family, and also allow businesses to continue to operate as long as existing policies are aligned with this proposed legislation. Del. Sewell identified that this Senate Bill 2- Sen. Boysko is patron, and House bill

Diane shared that regarding OTPs, there is proposed legislation to allow for virtual pharmacists to oversee filling bottles, there is currently a pilot in place regarding Brightview

Dr. Breslin asked the question of whether there is a process for the council to initiate legislation vs. just endorsing, Nathanael shared that this would cross the line to lobbying which is prohibited but members of the council can privately introduce legislative ideas and work with legislators, Then the council can endorse if there exists proposed legislation

Other business:

Nathanael asked the council regarding which months are best for scheduling, also shared that the council could schedule a meeting in January 2027 to have a meeting on the calendar to know more specifics regarding legislation

Council did not share any opposition to keeping the months that we had in 2025 in the scheduling of the 2026 meetings

V. Public Comment (5-minute speaking limit)

Yitzy Halon, Mainspring Recovery, reiterated the issue regarding DMAS reimbursement and identified that his company and other providers have formed the VA Association of Residential Treatment Providers, shared that there's a host of issues including that reimbursement issue, Additionally, he identified that in ASAM 4, there will be numerous updates including how providers operate in the state and modalities regarding patient care

VI. Adjournment

Motion introduced to adjourn, Motion approved, Meeting adjourned