

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **McGuire, Meghan (DBHDS)** <[meghan.mcguire@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:meghan.mcguire@dbhds.virginia.gov)>

Date: Wed, Jun 4, 2025 at 2:17 PM

Subject: Update on the DBHDS Community Services Division Realignment

To:

***Sent on behalf of DBHDS Commissioner Nelson Smith***

Dear Staff and Stakeholders,

I want to share an important update on my recent message (included below), with new ways for you to learn more and help shape our recovery and prevention efforts at DBHDS.

These changes reflect a deeper commitment to recovery and prevention efforts intended to enhance coordination, increase system-wide collaboration, and better serve individuals and families. Importantly, recovery and prevention services are core parts of DBHDS and they will continue to expand for Virginia. This move strengthens coordination and ensures recovery and prevention are present in system conversations and decisions. Importantly, no services will be reduced, no service disruptions will occur for individuals, and no changes will be made to community funding or support.

As we move to implement this change, we welcome stakeholder input to help develop a thoughtful plan. We've heard the concerns of the community and we're responding by creating clear structures for community input throughout this transition. We soon will be announcing opportunities such as listening sessions, town hall meetings, "lunch and learns," and a new stakeholder workgroup. In the meantime, I wanted to make you aware of several resources you can use right away:

- **Reorganization Webpage** – We've developed a new webpage, found at [www.dbhds.virginia.gov/community-services-division-reorganization](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/community-services-division-reorganization), where you can find more information about this change. We will provide more details as they are available, such as announcements about upcoming meetings.
- **Dedicated Inbox** – Please share your feedback at any time at [communityservices@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:communityservices@dbhds.virginia.gov). Stakeholder input matters, and we are listening to your thoughts on how to implement these changes correctly.

Finally, at DBHDS recovery and prevention are never side conversations - they are central to every policy, program, and funding decision we make. This change ensures these voices help shape Virginia's behavioral health system. I've included more information below on key benefits to individuals, the community, and the system.

Sincerely,  
Nelson

**Nelson Smith**  
Commissioner  
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health  
and Developmental Services  
Phone: 804-786-3921

## Community Services Division Reorganization

### How This Change Benefits Individuals, the Community, and the System

- **Embeds Recovery and Prevention in Decision-Making** – Recovery and prevention need to be central to every policy, program, and funding decision we make.
- **Streamlines Operations and Budgeting** – DBHDS is modernizing how this division manages resources by bringing related programs under coordinated leadership to maximize impact and outcomes and free up resources and time to invest back into direct services and community supports.
- **Reduces Operational Silos** – More integration of Prevention and Recovery can foster cross-division collaboration, ensuring every initiative benefits from recovery- and prevention-oriented perspectives.
- **Improves Communication and Systemwide Consistency** – Integrating these efforts ensures policies move fluidly across the division, enables better-coordinated services, and allows DBHDS to better share data, identify trends, and respond to challenges.
- **Develops Long-Term Benefits for the Community** – Recovery and prevention programs will have a direct line to adult services leadership, ensuring these strategies are part of the continuum of care, and leading to a system that feels more connected, responsive, and person-centered.
- **Better Positions DBHDS for Uncertainty in Federal Grant Funding** – Integrating recovery and prevention into the core of DBHDS operations positions these essential services to be part of baseline agency operations, reducing vulnerability to uncertainty.
- **Helps Division Meet Heightened Demands** – By integrating prevention and recovery efforts within Adult Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Services, DBHDS can better optimize the whole divisional workforce and expertise. Prevention and recovery principles must be embedded into major activities such as STEP-VA, behavioral health redesign, quality improvement/assurance, and more.

communityservices@dbhds.virginia.gov

---

**From:** McGuire, Meghan (DBHDS) <[meghan.mcguire@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:meghan.mcguire@dbhds.virginia.gov)>

**Date:** Thursday, May 22, 2025 at 9:02 AM

**To:**

**Subject:** Next Phase of DBHDS Reorganization - Sent on behalf of Commissioner Smith

**Sent on behalf of DBHDS Commissioner Nelson Smith**

Dear Central Office Staff,

You have been doing such impressive work throughout DBHDS, and I am incredibly proud of how we are accomplishing major goals and better supporting the people we serve.

I can't thank you enough for all your efforts advancing *Right Help, Right Now* and other DBHDS priorities to strengthen workforce, build community capacity, and modernize our system. You are all very aware of how organizations grow and change, and nowhere in Central Office has this been more evident than in the Community Services division. This division does phenomenal work supporting community programs and services for people with mental illness, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities. It also houses our critical licensing, human rights, and regulatory offices. Because of this division's essential mission for Virginians and families, I am working with Deputy Commissioner Heather Norton to continue to refine how the division is structured, and I want to share several changes with you today.

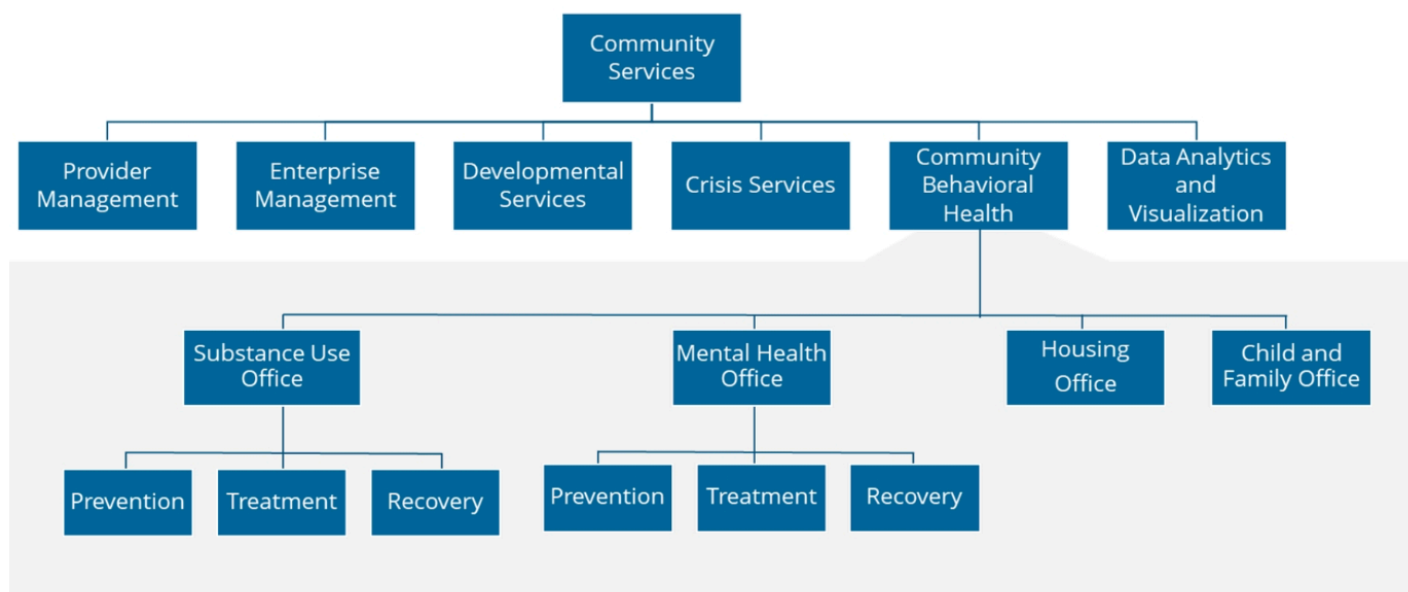
### Structural Changes – When DBHDS created the Office of

Recovery Services over 10 years ago, it was a new concept to have an office solely focused on recovery. The office has done tremendous work, particularly around peer services. Similarly, the Office of Behavioral Health Wellness has done incredible work around

prevention and programs with direct impact on Virginians. But we need to give even more voice to recover and greater emphasis on prevention than they are getting as siloed, standalone offices. The next step to ensure the concepts of recovery and prevention

are woven throughout community services is to integrate these offices into the larger offices of adult mental health and substance use services. By doing so, we will better support service delivery across the continuum of care and elevate recovery and prevention

in all our programs and services. There are no positions eliminated by taking these actions. In fact, the good work of these offices will be elevated by ensuring they are at the table for discussions across adult mental health and substance use disorders. You can see where both recovery and prevention are represented, along with treatment, in both adult behavioral health and SUDs in the organization chart below of the behavioral health area of the Community Services Division:



### Data and Analytics – DBHDS is making leaps and bounds

in modernizing our data and our information technology. We lead Virginia in incorporating cloud-based technologies and we will have a new data exchange in a matter of weeks that will vastly improve our data capabilities. We are creating a data and analytics office to ensure we harness data across all of the Community Services Division so we can speak more clearly about the outcomes achieved and about gaps we need to fill.

Please note there are aspects of changes in this division that we are still determining, and over the next month, we'll be sharing more updates. In the meantime, I've included an organizational chart for your review.

I am excited about this next phase to further sharpen our ability to deliver the highest quality results. As always, thank you for all that you do to support Virginians with behavioral health disorders and developmental disabilities, their families, and their communities.

Sincerely,

Nelson

Nelson Smith  
Commissioner  
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health  
and Developmental Services  
804-786-3921



*A life of possibilities for all Virginians*