

## **2013 General Assembly Archive**

### **Voices for Virginia's Children, Campaign for Children's Mental Health**

#### **Expand Children's Crisis Response Services and Child Psychiatry**

Last year, the General Assembly funded projects in three of Virginia's five regions (Southwest, Lynchburg and Richmond). These projects are producing positive outcomes for children and saving money. An additional \$1.45 million is needed to fund the other two regions of the state – Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads – where there are 50,000 children with serious mental health disorders.

Please support the Governor's amendment of \$1 million for FY14

Please support an additional \$450,000 (Item 315 #6h-O'Bannon; Item 315 #3s-Howell and Item 315 #9s-Hanger)

#### **Session Summary:**

Despite bitterly cold temperatures and snow on the ground, a dedicated group of advocates came to Richmond Jan. 24 for the second annual Children's Mental Health Advocacy Day. Family members and mental health providers talked to legislators about the importance of expanding state funding for children's crisis response services and child psychiatry to all five health planning regions of Virginia. The day began with a briefing for advocates, followed by a Legislative Breakfast at the General Assembly Building for legislators and their aides.

As a result of these advocacy efforts, the Campaign secured \$1.9 million in FY14 for children's crisis response services and child psychiatry; this total includes the \$1 million added by Gov. McDonnell and the \$900,000 added by the General Assembly. The funding goes to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, which then awards it to the regional consortia of community services boards. Each region has a unique plan for serving children that meets the most urgent needs in its communities.

Due to the collective efforts of Voices for Virginia's Children and its many partners in the Campaign for Children's Mental Health, Virginia has appropriated \$5.15 million in new funding for children's mental health services in this two-year state budget cycle. This means that the estimated 100,000 children with serious mental health disorders in Virginia now have better access to child psychiatry and community-based crisis response services to help avoid hospitalizations and other out-of-home placements.