

Championing public policies that improve the lives of Virginia's children.

Funding Proposals to Integrate Mental Health in Schools and Community Settings

School-based mental health integration pilot | (McClellan [331#5s](#)/Price [311#3h](#)) | This amendment provides \$10 million each year from the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to local school divisions to contract for community-based mental health services for students from public or private community-based providers.

Recovery high school pilot | ([Coyner 136#6h](#)/Morrissey [136 #14s](#)): In 2020, the General Assembly approved a bill to begin a recovery high school pilot in Chesterfield County, but put the funding on hold. This amendment provides the funding to jumpstart the pilot as a year-round high school for students residing in [Region 1](#) in the early stages of substance use recovery. This bill provides \$864,000 the first year and \$890,000 the second year to begin the program.

Expand Resources that Integrate Mental Health in Health Care Settings

The **Virginia Mental Health Access Program (VMAP)** has developed a strong, efficient, and effective model of behavioral health and health integration. Proposed increases will expand training efforts beyond primary care into emergency departments and provide additional expertise to support young children and their families. Governor Northam's proposed budget includes an additional \$2.3 million each year to expand the reach of the program.

Workforce Shortages are a Major Barrier to Accessing Services

Governor Northam's proposed budget provides \$3 million in one-time funds for a contract with the Virginia Health Care Foundation to pay for the costs of supervisory hours needed for licensure for individuals seeking advanced degrees in social work or counseling. Senator Barker adds an additional \$1 million for this effort (Barker [144#4s](#)). Additional amendments from Senator Deeds and Delegate Davis adds 10 new psychiatry residency slots to allow more providers to enter that specialty (Deeds [304#5s](#) /Davis- [304#39h](#)).

Prioritize Investments in the Mental Health System

Enhance funding for existing services by continuing to support the expansion of STEP-VA and improve Medicaid reimbursement rates for behavioral health services to provide accessible services. Both the public and private mental health providers can serve more children and youth with improved Medicaid reimbursement rates for clinical mental health services.

Medicaid Reimbursement Rate Increases

- Extend 12.5% increase for home and community-based services (Hanger, Farris, Willett, Adams)
- Increase rates for residential treatment facilities (Davis, Ruff)
- Increase rates for peer and family support services (Hodges, Deeds)

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Identify Solutions and Sustain Supports

Study of school-based mental health services (McClellan [33#2s](#) /Brewer [33#1s](#)) by creating a task force of the Behavioral Health Commission to assess current approaches developed at the local level and recommend how the state can support and sustain approaches by maximizing federal funding and integrated with existing public and private community-based services. The task force should make recommendations for how the state can develop and support more integrated student mental health supports. *Similar approaches proposed by Senator Dunnavant to study school-based mental health services and proposals to examine school-based health services from Senator Favola, Delegate Robinson and Delegate Bennett-Parker could be incorporated with this approach.*