



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
*Office of the Governor*

John Littel  
Secretary of Health and Human Resources

December 15, 2022

The Honorable Janet D. Howell  
Co-Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

The Honorable George L. Barker  
Co-Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Barry D. Knight  
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

Dear Senators Howell and Barker, and Delegate Knight:

Thank you for your leadership and support of efforts to reform the Commonwealth's behavioral health system. There is likely no time in our history where this focus is needed more than today.

We are pleased to partially submit the Behavioral Health and Catawba Hospital Transformation Plans for your consideration and feedback. The full narrative section of the Behavioral Health and the full Catawba report will be submitted in early January. These reports are submitted pursuant to Item 283 F. 1-3 of the 2022 Appropriations Act:

F.1. The Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall establish a workgroup to review the current structure of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and make recommendations on modifications to the department's structure that improves the delivery of behavioral health and developmental disability services to the citizens of the Commonwealth. The workgroup shall include representatives of DBHDS, the Department of Medical Assistance Services, the Department of Planning and Budget, the Behavioral Health Commission and other entities as deemed necessary by the Secretary to complete the tasks of the workgroup. Specifically, the workgroup shall evaluate: (i) whether responsibility for developmental disability services is more appropriate in another state agency or a new state agency; (ii) whether community-based behavioral health services and the operations of the state mental health hospitals should be divided into separate entities; (iii) whether a different structure or model, such as public-private partnerships, is appropriate for the operation of state mental health

hospitals; and (iv) whether the current structure for community-based services can be enhanced to better deliver services.

2. Out of this appropriation, \$750,000 from the general fund the first year shall be provided for the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to contract for a feasibility analysis to transform the Catawba Hospital Campus into a state-of-the-art campus at which a continuum of substance abuse treatment and recovery services, including long-term, short-term, acute, and outpatient services, is provided in addition to the array of behavioral health services currently provided to individuals in need of behavioral health care services. This analysis shall be completed for consideration of the workgroup in its recommendations on the structure and delivery of behavioral health and developmental disability services.

3. The workgroup shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1, 2022."

The **Behavioral Health Transformation Plan, *Right Help, Right Now***, was created not only to improve crisis care for behavioral health, but also to expand prevention services to keep people from crisis, and to improve re-entry and stabilization post crisis.

This work stands on the shoulders of the broad, bipartisan effort to strengthen Behavioral Health in the Commonwealth over the last 15 years, of which you and your colleagues have been leaders. It was crafted after reviewing past studies and initiatives; conducting about 40 listening sessions with hundreds of individuals representing both private and public, community-based organizations and advocacy groups and individuals receiving services; reviewing best practices from other states, and consulting with numerous State Agencies to determine gaps in Virginia's behavioral health services and ways to improve the experiences of people seeking services from Virginia's behavioral health and developmental disability system.

This allowed our team to define the current state of Virginia's behavioral health system, determine what the future state should be, and address the gaps we need to fill to get there. The Behavioral Health Realignment Plan is concerned with the continuum of care across pre-crisis prevention services, crisis care, post-crisis recovery and support, and incorporates all of the review knowledge into 6 pillars upon which to establish the behavioral health system with initiatives under each divided into 3 years of effort.

The full Behavioral Health Realignment Plan will address the four specific questions in the budget request. Additionally, after the work of the Session is concluded, a detailed, three-year implementation plan will be released, including a dashboard by which we will measure progress.

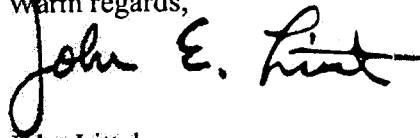
The **Catawba Hospital Transformation Plans** recommends the evolution of the Catawba Hospital Campus into a state-of-the-art substance abuse treatment and recovery services center capable of providing long-term, short-term, acute, and outpatient facilities to individuals in need of substance abuse disorder services.

The attached report provides the progress to-date to review the Catawba Hospital Transformation Plans. However, additional details including data analysis incorporating workforce, operational, public-private partnerships, capital requirements and considerations to deliver substance abuse treatment and recovery services presented in various scenarios will be provided prior to the beginning of the 2023 Session of the General Assembly.

Together, these ambitious plans will positively and holistically transform the state of behavioral health care in Virginia to better serve the needs of our citizens.

I look forward to discussing these with you and am available to answer any questions from you or your staff.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Littel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Littel