



COALITION FOR VIRGINIANS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES

2025 East Main Street, Suite 120, Richmond, VA 23223

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PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Family Advocacy
Creating Education
& Services (FACES)

Federation of
Families of Virginia

Mental Health
America of Virginia

NAMI-Virginia

Parents & Associates
of the
Institutionalized
Retarded

Psychiatric Society
of Virginia

Substance Abuse &
Addiction Recovery
Alliance of Virginia

The Arc of Virginia
VaACCSES

Virginia Network of
Private Providers

Virginia
Organization of
Consumers Asserting
Leadership

Virginia
Rehabilitation
Association

Voices for Virginia's
Children

Members of the Senate Finance Health and Human Resources
Subcommittee:

I'm Raymond Burmester, a Co-chair of the Coalition for
Virginians with Mental Disabilities - a 20-year old coalition that currently
consists of 13 state level advocacy organizations.

You have just heard from several of our Coalition member
organizations so I will not repeat any of the requests that they have made.

The most important observation I would like to share with you is
that *it costs much more to treat people with mental disabilities
inappropriately than it does to treat them appropriately in the
community*. It costs more to treat people with substance addiction or
mental illness in jails or state hospitals than it does in community
treatment programs. It costs more to care for *most* people with mental
illness or mental retardation in state facilities than it does to surround them
with appropriate long-term supports in the community.

With your support, our service delivery system is gradually being
transformed into a system that (1), has shared accountability at all levels,
(2), makes efficient use of limited resources, and (3), provides measurable
outcomes related to the goals of the service.

We are grateful for your support because we cannot accomplish
our goal of System Transformation without it. On behalf of the Coalition
for Virginians with Mental Disabilities, and even more importantly, on
behalf of my 38 year old profoundly disabled son Randall, *thank you for
your support*.