


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 13, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR A REGIONAL CLINICAL RESPONSE TEAM FROM THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRAINING CENTER TO THE ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD

**ISSUE:** Transfer of responsibility for a regional Clinical Response Team from the Northern Virginia Training Center to the Alexandria CSB.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the transfer of responsibility for a regional Clinical Response Team (CRT) program from the Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC) to the Alexandria CSB;
- (2) Authorize an increase of 1.0 FTE Therapist III to be fully-supported by the Northern Virginia Regional Projects Office;
- (3) Accept \$139,856 in Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services funding that has been allocated to this program by the Regional Management Group; and
- (4) Affirm that because of severe City budget constraints no City funds will be available to fund this program in FY 2009 or future years.

**BACKGROUND:** In FY 2005, a Northern Virginia Intellectual Disability/Mental Health (ID/MH) workgroup reviewed programs and resources in the region that provide services to dually diagnosed ID/MH consumers who are in need of consultation. While there were multiple identified needs for outpatient clinical services, the workgroup determined the greatest area of need was that of consultation and support for psychiatric crisis intervention/stabilization service providers. The workgroup found that while area CSBs have a variety of crisis intervention and emergency services, none of these resources has expertise in the treatment of ID/MH consumers.

Based on their findings, the ID/MH workgroup submitted a proposal to the Regional Management Group of Health Planning Region II (HPRII) to recommend the formation of a regional Clinical Response Team (CRT) to provide crisis prevention; consultation and support to crisis intervention/stabilization services

providers; hospital diversion; and in-hospital and residential treatment facility consultation services for consumers with a diagnosis of intellectual disability who have experienced a mental health crisis. (Health Planning Region II comprises the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute, Northern Virginia Training Center, Alexandria CSB, and the CSBs of Arlington, Fairfax/Falls Church, Loudoun and Prince William Counties. The Regional Management Group is made up of the Executive Directors of these entities.)

**DISCUSSION:** In FY 2006, Fairfax/Falls Church CSB, the fiscal agent for HPRII, received \$890,570 from the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services for regional crisis stabilization initiatives. The Regional Management Group allocated \$90,000 of this funding for the CRT project, about half the amount the workgroup had requested. The program began operating out of the Northern Virginia Training Center in FY 2007 and primarily funded limited hours for a psychiatrist with expertise in ID/MH consumers, with limited assistance from George Mason University students.

Even with the limited scope necessitated by partial funding, it was clear to ID directors and members of the Regional Management Group that the full program, if implemented, could play a crucial role in addressing the lack of appropriate community-based services for consumers with intellectual disabilities who have experienced a mental health crisis, and could ultimately reduce recurrent hospitalizations or extended inpatient treatment. As a result, the Regional Management Group has agreed to fund the full cost of the program, provided that administration of the program be moved to Alexandria CSB and that Alexandria CSB begin billing Medicaid and other payers for the services being provided. (Over the last several years, the State crisis stabilization and other State monies have funded a variety of projects throughout the region. Each project serves the region but is administered by a single CSB.)

The full program will consist of 1.0 FTE Therapist III, a contract psychiatrist for an average of six hours per week, and three hours per week (on average) of contract behavioral specialist services. The Therapist III, the only salaried employee, will operate out of the Northern Virginia Regional Projects Office in Chantilly, Fairfax County, for easy accessibility for the region and a more central location for travel to or from all CSBs.

The Alexandria Community Services Board approved the transfer at its meeting on February 5, 2009.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The estimated first-year cost of the CRT is \$139,856 and includes \$4,750 in start-up costs. The Regional Management Group has committed the full funding plus start up costs for FY 2009 (\$139,856) and \$136,018 on an annual basis. Any revenues received for services rendered by the program will be handled as follows: 1) 7.3% to Alexandria CSB as reimbursement for administrative expenses; 2) whatever amount is needed by Alexandria CSB to fund annual or other RMG-approved cost increases; and 3) remainder to Regional Projects Office. Acceptance of these funds does not affect City funding. The funds are restricted for providing Clinical Response Team services and cannot be used for other purposes. It is intended, because of severe City budget constraints, that no City funds will supplement this program in future years if the Regional funding and program revenue do not 100% support all costs of this initiative.

**STAFF:**

L. Michael Gilmore, PhD, Department Director, MHMRSA  
Jane Hassell, Administrative Services Division Director, MHMRSA