

What You Can Do for Behavioral Health

from LWV 9-22-17 Workshop

1. Identify the issue(s) that you care most about. There are so many issues and League positions that you either “choose” deliberately or by default or may become paralyzed.

2. Assemble basic information about that issue:

- relevant LWV positions and any current “study” issue
- what local and state organizations are involved that seem most informed and responsible; link up with them
- what your local candidates, legislators and related local entities believe and support

3. Identify the advocacy tactic(s) that are best for *you* from the many that LWV describes. Mark your calendar accordingly, and GO, preferably before the madhouse legislative session starts

Women’s Legislative Roundtable, a very informative forum open to all Virginians and legislators, meets weekly in Richmond, mostly during the legislative session. Check www.lwv-va.org for more information.

Resources below can help you learn, collaborate, and advocate for *your* issue

If you want to be an *active study* participant, contact the LWV-VA Behavioral Health Committee Chair, Linda Rice at lindarice678@cox.net. Or ask to be put on a list for occasional updates.

Earlier behavioral health intervention and community based treatment:

- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) (www.namivirginia.org)
- VA Behavioral Health Advisory Council needs public input and members: <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/about-dbhds/boards-and-councils/bhadvocatorycouncil>; c/o Mental Health America of Virginia, bruce.cruser@mhav.org (804) 257-5591
- Voices for Virginia’s Children: <http://www.vakids.org/about-us>
- Virginia Poverty and Law Center: www.vplc.org
- Healthcare for All Virginians <http://www.havcare.org>; Havcare@gmail.com; very broad coalition, enough huge providers to be more conservative

Affordable and specialized community housing

- Virginia Housing Alliance (www.vahousingalliance.org)
- Virginia Supportive Housing (<http://www.virginiassupportivehousing.org/>)

Drug pricing

- Fair Pricing Coalition (www.fairpricingcoalition.org)
- Governor’s Taskforce on Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse (<https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/taskforce/>)

Justice System; Specialty diversion courts, and treatment for mentally ill prisoners

- Guide to mental health courts: https://www.bja.gov/Publications/CSG_MHC_Research.pdf
- Treatment Advocacy Center <http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/browse-by-state/virginia>
- Re-entry programs, Virginia Cares, vacares.org/ re-entry programs to support community life after prison

Health provider shortages

- SJ47 initiative addresses this. <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=141&typ=bil&val=sj47>
- Virginia Health Care Foundation www.vhcf.org/who-and-how-we-help/behavioral-health