

Virginia Addiction and Recovery Council (VARC)

July 16 2026 Meeting Minutes

Submitted for approval on September 16, 2026

Chair: Dr. Peter Breslin, M.D.

Secretary: Delegate Adele McClure (HD-2)

Attendees:

In-person

Dr. Peter Breslin, *Council Chair*
Delegate Adele McClure
Nathanael Rudney, *DBHDS*
Senator Jennifer Boysko
Delegate Debra Gardner
Delegate Kirk McPike
Mike Sizemore, *SAARA of Virginia*
Anika Richburg, *SAARA of Virginia*
Jen MacArthur, *Department of Criminal Justice Services*
Stephen Wade, *Department of Social Services*
Kristen McKeon, *Department of Corrections*
Kristin Hunter, *Department of Criminal Justice Services*
Dr. Robin Binford-Weaver, *Department of Juvenile Justice*
Dr. Samantha Hollins, *Department of Education*
Tiffany George, *DMAS*
Emily Witt, *DMV*
Keely Kieweiet, *Foundation for Healthy Youth*
Angela Brown, *Council on Problem Gambling*
Anna Powers, *Supreme Court of VA*
Bob Ramos, *VITA*
LeNelle Mozell, *VACSB*
Tanya Nesgoda, *DBHDS*
Melissa Alberto, *HOD*

Virtual

Rebecca Holmes, *Highlands CSB*
Jason Lowe, *DMAS*
Sara Winchester, *Shatterproof*
MiMi Sedjat, *Eastern Shore CSB*
Candace Roney, *DBHDS*
Adam Rosatelli
Anne Rogers, *DBHDS*
Michelle Satterlund, *Macaulay Satterlund & Sessa, PC*
Nicky Fadley, *Strength in Peers*
Adam Rosatelli, *Opioid Abatement Authority*
Chuck Wilcox, *Virginia Association of Addiction Professionals*
Heather Martinsen, *VACSB Public Policy Committee*

Meeting Minutes:

a. *Welcome and Introductions*

Chairman Breslin called the meeting to order. Members and participants introduced themselves in-person and virtually. Staff confirmed a quorum was present.

b. *Review of Minutes from May 21 2026 Meeting*

Staff confirmed circulating May 21 meeting minutes in advance for review. One correction was offered (name update). Motion made and seconded to approve meeting minutes without objection or additional correction.

c. *Old Business*

The Council received a brief introductory update regarding the Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council (CPHAC) and its role in advising the Cannabis Control Authority (CCA) on public health and community concerns related to retail cannabis implementation.

d. *Agency and Organizational Updates*

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice – Presenter: Dr. Robin Binford Weaver

DJJ presented an overview of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and recovery services provided to youth within the juvenile justice system. DJJ currently serves approximately 135 residents at Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center (~15 females, ~120 males). Approximately 90% of residents have a diagnosed SUD treatment need, with an additional 6% having experimented with substances. DJJ utilizes evidence-based group and individual programming, including:

- **Cannabis Youth Treatment Program:** Focuses on alcohol/marijuana use using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), motivational enhancement, and coping/relapse prevention skills
- **Voices Program:** Gender-specific, strengths-based, and journaling-focused program for female residents addressing relationship dynamics, mindfulness, and recovery skills
- **The Seven Challenges Program:** Implemented approximately one year ago for youth with severe SUD, opioid use, or poly-substance use. Emphasizes personal responsibility, honest self-reflection, decision-making, and evaluating both the positive and harmful aspects of substance use

DJJ also highlighted its Mental Health Services Transition Plan, which requires all necessary community treatment appointments to be scheduled prior to a youth's release. For youth transitioning to the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC), DJJ coordinates directly with VADOC to maintain continuity of care.

Members discussed long-term outcome tracking post-release, potential integration of youth Peer Recovery Specialists, family therapy components, and the distinction between court-involved DJJ youth and non-court-involved youth served in regional recovery high schools.

Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services – Presenter: Tiffany George and Jason Lowe

DMAS provided operational and policy updates regarding Medicaid-funded addiction treatment services:

- **ASAM 4.0 Implementation:** DMAS is actively preparing for the transition from ASAM 3 to ASAM 4 criteria, which introduces changes to levels of care. Policy adjustments and licensing coordination with DBHDS are underway, targeting a phased implementation date of July 1, 2027. A budget package has been submitted to support implementation
- **Re-Entry Targeted Case Management (RTCM):** Phased implementation went live on July 1, with Community Services Boards (CSBs) serving as sole providers. DMAS continues active coordination with VADOC, DJJ, and regional jails
- **Long-Acting Injectables (LAIs) Unbundling:** Chairman Breslin raised ongoing concerns regarding inpatient psychiatric units' inability to bill separately for LAIs prior to discharge due to bundled reimbursement structures. DMAS acknowledged that friction within the Provider Rate Development (PRD) unit has delayed resolution and committed to following up with PRD leadership to report back to the Council

e. *Legislative Updates*

Legislators in attendance were given the opportunity to share legislative updates and upcoming priorities:

Delegate Adele McClure

- Recently toured Phoenix House, which is a recovery residence in Arlington, emphasizing barrier crimes reform as a critical priority for expanding the Peer Recovery Specialist workforce (collaborating with Delegate Marcia Price for the upcoming session)
- Participated in a tour of a medical cannabis production facility alongside Senator Boysko to review product safety, labeling, and quality control measures
- Noted that the Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) is initiating a study on youth experiencing SUD, which will yield legislative recommendations regarding step-down models

Delegate Debra Gardner

- Highlighted upcoming Health, Human Services, and Public Safety legislative bootcamps ahead of the 2027 session
- Shared insights from her participation in a multi-state mental health/substance use legislative cohort, encouraging Council members to bring forward policy concepts early for drafting in November

Delegate Kirk McPike

- Expressed strong interest in supporting legislative solutions for recovery housing, specifically addressing the growing shortage of dedicated recovery housing for LGBTQ+ individuals
- Highlighted ongoing interest in addressing problem gambling and offered support through his seat on the House Finance Committee to advance Council priorities

Senator Jennifer Boysko

- Passed universal paid leave legislation granting up to three months of partial salary replacement, with SUD inpatient treatment included as a qualifying medical event.
- Passed unanimous legislation directing the Board of Pharmacy to begin promulgating rules and regulations for psilocybin treatment protocols as federal rescheduling approaches.
- Passed legislation categorizing unauthorized sales/possession of kratom as a Class 1 misdemeanor, prohibiting sales to individuals under 21, and mandating strict product labeling.
- Continuing collaboration with VADOC on reentry safety nets and re-engaging efforts to establish a statewide Gaming Regulatory Commission.

f. *New Business*

Overview of Speciality Dockets in Virginia – Presenter: Anna Powers, Supreme Court of Virginia, Office of the Executive Secretary

OES presented a comprehensive overview of Virginia's specialty dockets, which operate as evidence-based alternatives to incarceration for high-risk, high-need individuals. Docket types include Adult Recovery Courts (60 statewide, primarily Circuit Court), Behavioral Health Dockets (21 in General District), and Veterans Treatment Dockets (10 across General District, JDR, and Circuit Courts). In 2025, over 2,016 active participations were served with a 63.9% graduation rate. Three year reconviction rates for recovery court graduates is 18.4%, and speciality dockets yield a net savings of \$19,234 per participant. Gaps and needs that have been identified include geographical gaps in docket availability (e.g., the 10th Judicial Circuit / Southside region) and the potential integration of routine screening for gambling disorder in partnership with DBHDS.

One Voice for Recovery Coalition– Presenter: Anika Richburg and Mike Sizemore

SAARA of Virginia and partner organizations presented the launch of the One Voice for Recovery Coalition, a statewide network of over 160 recovery advocates, providers, and individuals with lived experience. Their mission is to unify legislative advocacy across Virginia to elevate diverse voices and streamline policy recommendations for the General Assembly session. Subcommittees include: Prevention & Harm Reduction, Mental & Behavioral Health, Housing & Wraparound Services, Peer Workforce & Recovery Infrastructure, and Barrier Crimes Reform. Virtual meetings are held the first Thursday of each month from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM, with resources hosted on the SAARA of Virginia website.

g. *Public Comment*

The floor was opened for public comment in the room and online. Two comments were offered:

Bob Ramos (Virginia Information Technologies Agency - VITA): Shared an update on opioid settlement core funds allocated to expand suda.virginia.gov. VITA is procuring third-party vendors to build predictive analytics and data visualization tools for state and local opioid abatement efforts.

Sarah Winchester (Shatterproof): Announced the upcoming fall launch of treatmentatlas.org in Virginia, a free, confidential online platform to help individuals and providers locate licensed addiction treatment programs statewide.

h. *Adjournment*

Motion made and seconded to adjourn, the meeting adjourned.