

VALLEY VOICE

The official newsletter of Valley CSB

From the Executive Director



Dr. Kimberly McClanahan

Welcome to the first edition of Valley Voice, the quarterly newsletter for the Valley Community Service Board's (VCSB's) stakeholders. I hope that the newsletter will keep you informed about VCSB's services, programs, and activities in our communities.

It has been an exciting year at VCSB for a number of reasons. One of the most important and impactful for our employees was a compensation study comparing VCSB's salaries to other comparable entities; such a study had not been performed at VCSB since 2010. As a result, those employees whose salaries were found to be below market level were given salary increases to bring them up to comparable organizations. Given the workforce shortage in the behavioral health field across the Commonwealth and nation, this action, approved by VCSB's Board of Directors, was welcome indeed. I believe this action will positively impact recruitment and retention because VCSB's services are much needed in our communities. I'll update you on additional activities in the next edition of Valley Voice.

I hope this edition of Valley Voice will inform you about some of VCSB's current initiatives.

Don't lose your Medicaid coverage!

Virginia is reviewing members' Medicaid health coverage to make sure they still qualify until the end of March 2024. If you no longer qualify for Medicaid health coverage, you will be notified.

However, to make sure you receive all notices, members need to provide their up-to-date mailing addresses and phone numbers. Members can make updates:

- online at commonhelp.virginia.gov;
- by calling Cover Virginia at 1-855-242-8282;
- by calling the local [Department of Social Services](#); or
- by contacting the Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO, or "health plan")

Recovery comes home



In response to client transportation difficulties, VCSB wants to improve access to substance use treatment in rural communities.

Help for rural residents with substance use disorders (SU) will soon be available with Valley Community Services Board's (VCSB's) new mobile vehicle that will provide Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). Made possible

by a grant from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), the vehicle will circulate throughout the area several times per week.

People will be able to make appointments for services when the mobile unit comes to their community.

"Often (VCSB) clients are dealing with transportation issues, are unable to afford gas to travel back and forth or may have conflicts with work or childcare," said Shannon Johnson, OBAT Supervisor with VCSB.

A mobile vehicle reduces barriers because clients are able to receive treatment closer to home. This applies both to VCSB clients and those who aren't yet in recovery, she continued.

Persons with substance use disorders are greatly helped by MAT – a process in the Office Based Addiction Treatment (OBAT) department at VCSB that uses medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies to help some people to sustain recovery.

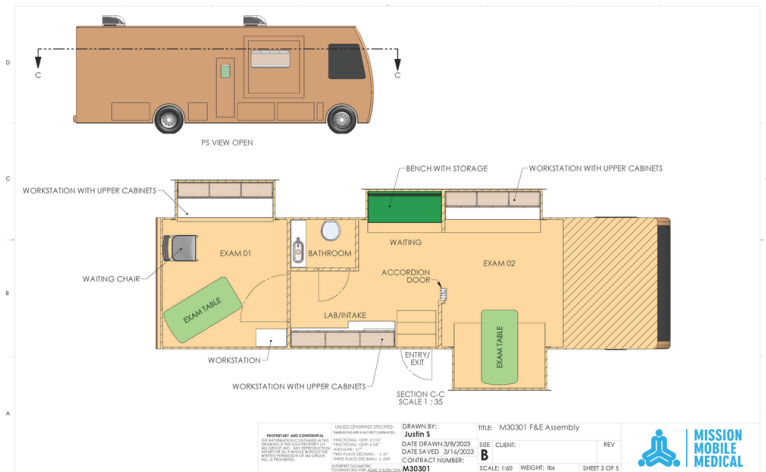
"MAT plays an important role in recovery for several reasons," Johnson said. "First, it significantly lowers people's risk of overdose and other negative outcomes associated with illicit use ... This is particularly relevant now that Fentanyl and Xylazine are so commonly mixed with

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Recovery comes home

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The unit will be fully ADA compliant with a wheelchair accessible lift (not shown).



many substances. Second, many MAT medications address withdrawal symptoms. Avoiding withdrawal is a huge reason people continue using. Being able to address the withdrawal in a safe and effective way increases the chance one can stop using."

Recovery is complicated for someone needing to address their relationships, their physical and mental health, legal issues, their housing, and job situation. "MAT helps to address (overdose risk) so people can focus on rebuilding the other areas, which will be necessary for long-term recovery," Johnson continued.

"Being in the community more often allows us to know the community better, which helps us determine how we can better meet their needs."

For more information on MAT services and the Mobile Unit, call 540-887-3200.

VCSB in the community



Pictured are (L-R): Annette Rood and Rain Washington

VCSB staff attend many events in the community throughout the year. For example, staff attended the Waynesboro Back to School Bash in July, and in May, members from the JEDI* committee hosted Faith Summit 2023. Events like these raise awareness of mental health and substance use treatment and prevention services.




Pictured are (L-R): Rhonda Turner, Keith Cartwright, Erin Botkin, Michelle Beverly, Kathy Baker, Nat Leonhard, Dr. Michael Turner.

*Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Valley Updates

Emergency Services

Planning for a new Crisis Receiving Center (CRC) continues. The CRC will allow up to 16 individuals facing a mental health or substance use crisis to de-escalate and receive support right away instead of spending time in the emergency department of Augusta Health. Eventually, the CRC will be expanded with a Crisis Stabilization Unit for those in need of more intensive care, but not hospitalization.



Veterans Feed and Connect Event

Wednesday, September 27 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Embrace Community Center - 932 Fir Street - Waynesboro

Active duty service members, Veterans and families welcome!


Support and resources. Free Food!

For more information: call Leah Hale - 540-280-2252




Prevention Services

Learn how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose emergency. REVIVE! training is free and open to the community in two formats: Lay Rescuer Training – roughly one hour; and Rapid REVIVE! – about 15 minutes to complete. For info on the program visit <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/behavioral-health/substance-abuse-services/revive/>. For training info reach out to REVIVE@vcsb.org.



Substance Use Services

Virginia Medicaid covers treatment to help members avoid a crisis, as well as services to support recovery. Treatment options include outpatient and inpatient care and medications shown by research to help people addicted to prescription drugs or other opioids. You may apply for Medicaid at Valley CSB, or talk to a case manager about coverage.



Developmental Disabilities Services

Valley's Community Coaching and Community Engagement (CC/CE) program will start soon. CC/CE is a community-based program that helps individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities learn to navigate their own communities with as much independence and inclusion as possible. Activities planned may include classes at The Y or a local art studio and performances in local live theaters. Valley is partnering with Vector Industries for workforce development workshops for participants who may want to become employed.