



Arlington Mental Health & Disability Alliance

“Advocating for self-determination and dignity”

Letter of Support
June 28, 2021

Commissioner Alison G. Land, FACHE
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services
1220 Bank Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Request for Proposals: Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) for First-Episode Psychosis

Dear Ms. Land,

I am writing on behalf of Arlington Mental Health & Disability Alliance (AMH&DA) to express our wholehearted support for the Arlington County Community Services Board’s application for the CSC for First-Episode Psychosis (FEP) grant for \$450,000 over two years. Additional funding for this program will come from STEP-VA Outpatient Mental Health funding and Arlington County local funds.

Arlington County is the only CSB in the Northern Virginia region to not have an FEP for young adults. AMH&DA is a community group that recognizes the critical gap this lack of an FEP program in our county’s continuum of care. In fact, establishing a Coordinated Specialty Care program for FEP is the top advocacy priority of our group. Without this essential program, too many of our young adults with serious mental illness have ended up in the revolving door of homelessness, arrest, incarceration, hospitalization, and relapse. CSC for FEP was also recommended by Arlington’s Police Practices Group in an effort to prevent young adults with serious mental illness from falling into crisis.

As advocates and members of the Arlington Community, AMH&DA supports expanding our continuum of care to include this evidence-based practice and strongly supports the CSB’s application for the CSC for First-Episode Psychosis grant and ask that its proposal be given your full consideration.

Sincerely,

Naomi Verdugo
Arlington Mental Health & Disability Alliance